

# The Struggle *for* American Independence

By  
Sydney George Fisher

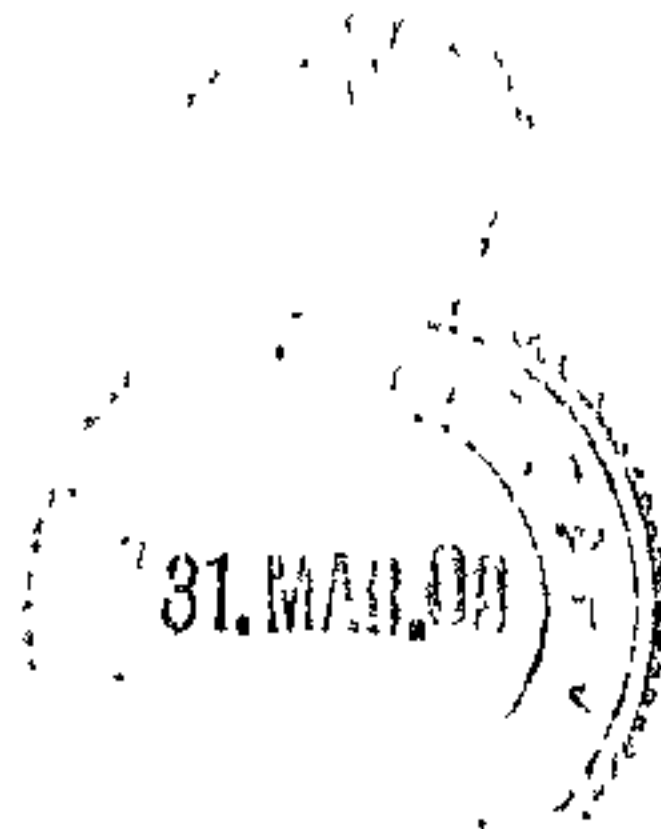
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*ILLUSTRATED*

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# The Struggle *for* American Independence

## LIII.

### THE QUIET SPRING OF 1777

Howe's abandonment of New Jersey without a struggle and settling down quietly in New York until the end of May, astonished every one. Washington fully expected him to make some capital stroke during the winter. In fact, there were several obvious expeditions any one or all of which a vigorous general with such a large force at his command would have undertaken.<sup>1</sup>

He could have attacked the remains of Washington's army at Morristown and captured or scattered it. He could have taken Philadelphia very easily in January when the upper Delaware was frozen. He could have sent a force to the South to take Georgia, as was done a couple of years afterwards by his successor, General Clinton. But Howe was interested in none of these warlike enterprises and went to sleep for the whole winter, like a bear.

The huge armada which had been sent across the ocean to conquer America had, in the hand of its general, become worse than a failure. It was a farce. Boston had been abandoned in the first year of the war to gain New York, and an outpost at Newport in the second, leaving the rest of the country as independent as ever. The patriots could ignore the occupation

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<sup>1</sup> Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. v, pp. 4, 5, 182.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

of New York and go on conducting their national and commercial life independently of it.

There was only one method of conquering America, the method which modern British generals have always had so clearly in mind; and that was to attack and utterly destroy the organized army of the enemy by defeating it in battle, relentlessly pursuing it, devastating the country which gave it support, capturing and imprisoning or executing the heads of the political party which directed the army and guided the sentiment of the people, capturing also large numbers of the patriot people themselves, destroying all their provisions and means of livelihood, and imprisoning the women and children to compel the submission of the men still at large. One can understand that such methods as these might have given Great Britain and the loyalists the military and political control of the Atlantic seaboard states, with the remnant of the patriot party seeking a precarious refuge in the western wilderness.<sup>2</sup>

But Howe pursued the reverse of this course. Instead of continuously following up the patriots and wearing them out, he gave them long periods of rest, for six or nine months, which exactly suited their purposes; for their militia would not keep the field continuously, and were willing to serve only for short periods and special occasions.

In March Washington's force at Morristown, and its outposts, had sunk to less than three thousand effectives, and Gordon gives his numbers as at times only fifteen hundred, all told, and relates a tradition that once when he could not muster more than four hundred he had to obtain patriot citizens of prominence to do duty as sentinels at his doors. Washington expressed the greatest surprise that Howe took no advantage of this weakness. "All winter," he says, "we were at their mercy, with sometimes scarcely a sufficient body of men to mount the ordinary guards, liable at every moment to be dissipated, if they had only thought proper to march against

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<sup>2</sup> *American Archives*, fifth series, vol. iii, p. 1424.

## THE PATRIOT FORCES

us." Washington thought that Howe must be ignorant of the real situation; and Boudinot gives a curious account of the efforts to deceive the British commander.

Washington had spread out his men, two or three to a house all along the main roads for miles round Morristown, so that the country people got the impression that he was 40,000 strong. The adjutant had in the pigeon holes of his desk what purported to be correct returns giving a force of 12,000. He invited to his office a person known to be a British spy, left him alone there for some time; and the copy of the returns which the spy took to New York is supposed to have convinced Howe that the patriot numbers were at least respectable.<sup>3</sup>

If he was really deceived in this way, with such ample opportunities to learn the real situation from the loyalists, it is very extraordinary. To the loyalists it seemed that the American army was "mouldering away like a rope of sand." They could not understand why Howe did not sally out from New York and capture it, or if it should fly from him scatter it, break up its organization, destroy its supplies and baggage, and do this every time it came near him. To allow it to do as it pleased, disband itself and come together again within a few miles of him, was inexplicable.

The patriot scouts and wandering parties were constantly picking off foragers and stragglers from the British posts at New Brunswick and Amboy; and Galloway remarked in one of his pamphlets, that they killed more regulars in that way than Howe would have lost by surrounding, assaulting or starving out the patriot force at Morristown.

The thirteen states, except the towns of New York and Newport, were enjoying perfect independence and self-government and were as free from British or any foreign interference

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<sup>3</sup> Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. v, p. 264; vol. viii, pp. 394, 502, 503, 504; Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. ii, pp. 422; Bancroft, "History of the United States," edition 1886, vol. v, p. 148; J. J. Boudinot, "Life of Boudinot," vol. i, pp. 72-74.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

as they are to-day. This, in itself, was a great advantage; for every month's and every day's enjoyment of independence deepened the love of it, and the determination to maintain it.

In passing through New Jersey, the British and Hessians had committed many outrages on the inhabitants, without even distinguishing between patriot and loyalist. The people had generally remained in their homes, which was the invariable custom during the first three years of the Revolution, under the avowed policy of the Ministry not to devastate, but only to fight battles between organized forces. In fact, the non-combatant portion of the population often crowded round as spectators of many of the early battles. But the Hessians were great plunderers; their officers made no attempt to restrain them; and the British officers excused the crime by saying that it was the Hessian way of fighting. When loyalists showed the protection certificates they had received from General Howe, the Hessians could not read them. They went on with their robberies more vigorously than ever; and the British soldiers not wishing to see the Hessians get all the booty, joined them in their crimes. A British officer after plundering a venerable blind gentleman of everything in his house, made sure of his own immortality by writing on the door: "Capt. Wills of the Royal Irish did this."

These outrages were accompanied by a perfect carnival of rape, which so maddened the patriot farmers that they organized themselves in small bands which watched for every British straggler or forager from Amboy and Brunswick and were not inclined to show much mercy. Impartial history, however, compels us to record that the patriot troops under Washington, being short of supplies of every sort, also took to indiscriminate plundering under the pretence that their victims were always loyalists. Between the depredations of the two armies there was something very like a reign of terror in New Jersey. The British were compelled to withdraw their small outposts from Elizabeth and Newark; and Washington, after an order to stop his own men from plundering, issued



## A TIME OF TRIUMPH

a triumphant proclamation calling on all who had taken the British oath of allegiance or had certificates of protection, to deliver up the certificates and take the oath to the United States.<sup>4</sup>

It was a time of triumph; and the patriots were so elated that they thought they might successfully attack the British army in New York. Possibly the southern troops had been gaining such success and prestige in New Jersey that the New Englanders felt that they also must do something for their reputations. Towards the end of January, about four thousand New England and New York militia under Generals Heath, Wooster, Parsons and Lincoln, camped before Fort Independence near Kingsbridge on the upper end of Manhattan Island, and demanded its surrender. The fort might possibly have been carried by assault; but Heath was too cautious and after some ten days of threatening and capturing of loyalists and their property in the neighborhood, he withdrew.<sup>5</sup>

At sea in their privateering and naval ventures this spring, the patriots were very successful. The great fleet of merchantmen that annually sailed from England's important colony of Jamaica, had been delayed by the discovery of a conspiracy among the negroes of that island. When they finally sailed the vessels were scattered by a storm and in their isolated defenceless condition fell an easy prey to the American rovers. Our privateersmen could now sell their prizes openly in the French and Spanish ports of the West Indies and also in the European ports of those nations by having the sale take place just outside of the harbor. There never has been a time since then when the great powers of Europe were so hostile to England and so willing to take action against her in every possible way. No other independence-loving people resisting the British empire have ever had the advantage of

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<sup>4</sup> *American Archives*, fifth series, vol. iii, pp. 1188, 1376, 1487; Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. ii, p. 414.

<sup>5</sup> *Writings of Washington*, Ford edition, vol. v, pp. 178, 191, 200, 214, 217; Gordon, "American Revolution," pp. 419, 420; Heath, *Memoirs*, pp. 99-105.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

being able to fit out hundreds of privateers and sell their prizes in European ports.<sup>6</sup>

In March, 1777, Howe aroused himself sufficiently to allow Colonel Bird to go up the Hudson to Peekskill with some five hundred troops, drive out the Americans under McDougall and burn the patriot magazines and storehouses containing immense supplies of provisions and military equipment. Washington had given special warning not to leave depots of valuable material near to navigable water; and it was strange that the British had left Peekskill so long unmolested.<sup>7</sup>

In this same month the ceremony of conferring on General Howe the Order of the Bath given him in England for the victory at Long Island, was performed in New York, possibly the only occasion when this foreign order was ever conferred upon any one on American soil. Judge Jones sarcastically described it as,

"A reward for evacuating Boston, for lying indolent upon Staten Island for near two months, for suffering the whole rebel army to escape him upon Long Island, and again at the White Plains; for not putting an end to rebellion in 1776, when so often in his power; for making such injudicious cantonments of his troops in Jersey as he did, and for suffering 10,000 veterans under experienced generals, to be cooped up in Brunswick, and Amboy, for nearly six months, by about 6,000 militia, under the command of an inexperienced general." (Jones, "Revolution in New York," vol. i, p. 177.)

In April Howe showed no signs of breaking his repose in New York; but Cornwallis, who commanded the posts at Amboy and New Brunswick, became at last aware that he had close at hand an opportunity for avenging Princeton. Some five hundred patriots under General Lincoln were encamped in a very exposed position at Bound Brook; and at daybreak on

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<sup>6</sup> Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. ii, p. 433; Stedman, "American War," vol. i, p. 259.

<sup>7</sup> Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. v, p. 297 note; Jones, "New York in the Revolution," vol. ii, p. 177; Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. ii, p. 423; Stedman, "American War," vol. i, p. 278.



## THE DANBURY ENTERPRISE

the 13th of April, Cornwallis with 2000 men had advanced within two hundred yards and had begun to surround them before they discovered their danger. Lincoln had just time to leave his house before the enemy entered it; but he succeeded in rushing out his whole force between the two columns of the British before they closed on him. He lost three pieces of artillery and sixty men; but the most serious loss was his papers which furnished the enemy with valuable information. All things considered, however, he was very lucky, and nothing but his alertness saved the whole command from capture.<sup>8</sup>

A few days afterwards Howe sent Governor Tryon and two thousand men to follow up the success of the Bird expedition, and seize a depot of patriot supplies at Danbury, Connecticut. Tryon, who was accompanied by Generals Agnew and Erskine to supply him, it is said, with military knowledge, landed on the shore of Long Island Sound between Fairfield and Norwalk, successfully reached Danbury twenty-three miles in the interior and destroyed hundreds of tons of provisions.

The Bird expedition had been entirely by water and on that account was easily successful. But it was a question whether a raid far into the interior like this Danbury enterprise could be safely conducted. The test of the enterprise would come on the return over that twenty-three miles to their ships in the sound.

The patriot militia were assembling from the neighboring country and Generals Wooster and Arnold, now returned from their adventures in Canada, were in command. Wooster with about two hundred men attacked the rear of the British as they returned, and succeeded in taking about forty prisoners; but was mortally wounded. Arnold in his heroic manner got in front of the enemy, and entrenched himself with five hundred men across the road with his right covered by a barn and his

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<sup>8</sup> Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. ii, p. 402; G. W. Greene, "Life of Nathaniel Greene," vol. i, p. 302; Boudinot's Journal, p. 66; J. J. Boudinot, "Life of Boudinot," vol. i, p. 50.

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left by a ledge of rock. There was a close action for some minutes, but the British got possession of the ledge of rocks and Arnold's men were forced to retreat.

A whole platoon of regulars fired at Arnold within thirty yards and, as usual with English marksmen, every ball missed its aim except one which killed his horse. As Arnold fell with the horse he drew his pistols from the holsters, shot the first soldier that ran up to bayonet him, and escaped.

It was a question now whether the retreat would be a disastrous one like that from Lexington and Concord, when the British were pursued and slaughtered all the way back to Boston. But the British officers had learned something. They followed a ridge of hills where they could not be ambuscaded, or fired upon from stone walls; and although the Americans followed and used artillery, Arnold's utmost exertions could make no great impression. The British easily escaped to their ships and by their own account their losses were trifling.<sup>9</sup>

In May the Connecticut patriots saw a chance to be revenged for this Danbury expedition. General Parsons organized an attack upon a British foraging party which had ventured out to Sag Harbor at the extreme eastern end of Long Island, and was protected by part of DeLancey's regiment of loyalists. The command of the patriot expedition was given Colonel Jonathan Meigs, who had served with Arnold in the attack on Quebec. Meigs started from New Haven and crossed the sound with about one hundred and seventy men in whaleboats, arrived near Sag Harbor on the evening of the 23rd of May, and made a night attack at two o'clock in the morning. DeLancey's loyalists were completely taken by surprise, and all but six of them were captured. Without having lost a man Meigs destroyed all the forage, brigs and sloops with a large quantity of supplies. In going and coming

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<sup>9</sup> Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. ii, p. 463; Jones, "New York in the Revolution," vol. i, p. 178; Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. v, pp. 346 note, 439; Stedman, "American War," vol. i, p. 279.

## MEIGS'S SUCCESSFUL EXPEDITION

he had covered a distance of nearly one hundred miles in eighteen hours.<sup>10</sup>

It was evidently unsafe for Howe to have any weak outlying posts or foraging parties. His successor, Clinton, avoided having any of these outposts; but conducted many raids like that of Tryon to Danbury.

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<sup>10</sup> Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. v, p. 308; Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol ii, p. 468; Jones, "New York in the Revolution," vol. i, pp. 180, 183, 184; Stedman, "American War," p. 282.

## LIV.

### THE BATTLE OF THE BRANDYWINE

IN the spring of 1777 the first assistance from France arrived at Portsmouth, New Hampshire, and consisted of several cargoes of powder, cannon, muskets, clothes, and shoes sufficient for 25,000 troops. This had been sent out in secret by the French Government through the brilliant and adventurous Beaumarchais, the young watch-maker, writer of plays, and intimate friend of the daughters of the King, who had established what in appearance was the mercantile house of Roderigue Hortalez & Company. Furnished with money by the French Government and allowed to take from the French arsenals supplies in small quantities at a time so as not to attract attention, he was able to send across the ocean, apparently as a private merchant, the commodities most needed by the patriot Americans. To hoodwink the British and carry on this romantic sort of business for more than a year would seem to be a chimerical sort of project, and yet it was accomplished.

He was to be paid for the supplies by return cargoes of tobacco and provisions furnished by the Congress, which had no specie money, but could obtain articles like tobacco and flour by purchase with paper money or as gifts from the States as their contribution to the cause. But letters from Arthur Lee led the Congress to suppose that the Beaumarchais cargoes were gifts, and the Congress became short in payment to him in some 3,000,000 francs, which was not finally settled until 1835 by an allowance of 800,000 francs to his daughter.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Lomenie, "Life of Beaumarchais;" Durand, "New Material for History of American Revolution," pp. 107, 151, 156; Stillé, "Beaumarchais and the Lost Million."

## HOWE IN NEW JERSEY

In May, 1777, Washington thought that General Howe would surely begin some active campaigning; and he accordingly left Morristown and placed the patriot force in a strong position some ten miles from New Brunswick at Middlebrook, whence he could follow and annoy any British force that might march towards Philadelphia.

The patriot soldiers were slowly returning from their homes and again joining the army; but there were as yet very few of them. In one sense this made little difference, for on the first of June Howe was waiting for the arrival of tents and field equipage, and had shown no signs of stirring from New York. On the 13th, however, he landed a force of eleven thousand men in New Jersey, provided with boats and rafts, as if he intended to march to the Delaware and so cross to Philadelphia. But he advanced only a few miles beyond New Brunswick, where he occupied a position about nine miles in length from Somerset Court House to Middle Bush, and he strengthened this line with redoubts. As he left all his boats and heavy baggage in New Brunswick, Washington judged that he had no intention of forcing his way towards Philadelphia.

This movement by Howe into New Jersey became the subject of much discussion in England, and his purpose and motives were severely criticised. Washington believed that his object was to destroy the American army, which was now seven thousand strong, and with that disposed of cross the Delaware and reach Philadelphia. He could more easily have destroyed the American force during the winter. Even now its seven thousand men were no match for his eleven thousand regulars in the open field. But entrenched in the strong position in which Washington had placed them, the patriot troops, if attacked, would have inflicted a heavy Bunker Hill loss on their enemy.

Washington expected such an attack and supposed it would be made on his right flank, which was his weakest point. Howe was unsparingly denounced by his military critics, especially Galloway and Stedman, for not making this attack, which they

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

said would have been surely successful and well worth the heavy loss he would have sustained. If he had not men enough with him he could have brought more from New York to accomplish such an important object.

In defending himself from this charge, Howe simply said that he considered it inadvisable to attack Washington. "I must necessarily have made a considerable circuit of the country, and having no prospect of forcing him, I did not think it advisable to lose so much time as must have been employed upon that march, during the intense heat of the season."

Why then was he out there in New Jersey in "the intense heat of the season" with an army of eleven thousand men for two weeks? Merely, it seems, to see if Washington could be persuaded to attack him. He made the movement, he says, "with a view of drawing on an action if the enemy should have descended from his post, and been tempted towards the Delaware, in order to defend the passage of the river on a supposition that I intended to cross it."<sup>2</sup>

It is strange that he should have supposed Washington to be a man of such poor judgment. But Howe's reasons and explanations are always hard to understand. He remained in his strong position between Somerset Court House and Middle Bush for five days, and then returned with his army to New Brunswick and Amboy. Washington was at a loss to account for this move, but thought that possibly Howe had been led to abandon the attack by hearing that the New Jersey militia were rallying to the American army in larger numbers than had been expected.

Light troops of Greene's and Wayne's brigades with Morgan's riflemen followed Howe in his retreat; and Washington at first thought that they had not been able to inflict any damage of consequence. But he afterwards reported that the British loss was considerable and that they had not suffered so severely since the Battle of Princeton.

Although the intentions of the British commander seemed

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<sup>2</sup> Howe's "Narrative," pp. 15, 16.



## FOOLING IN NEW JERSEY

obscure, his manœuvres were so harmless that Washington moved nearer to him and took post at Quibbletown. Howe sent all his heavy baggage over to Staten Island, followed by a considerable number of troops, as if he were giving up the game. But the next day his troops all returned and he marched suddenly from Amboy into New Jersey in two columns, with the apparent intention, as Washington supposed, to cut off Stirling's division and gain the high ground on the American left. This movement was partly successful, for Stirling's division was nearly cut off and lost some of its artillery. But Washington's main force retreated to the high ground. Both sides claimed the advantage. The loss in Stirling's division was not considered serious by the patriots and they believed that the British lost heavily in the skirmishing.

Howe, in his "Narrative," insisted that he had outwitted his enemy. But it was a very trifling advantage he had gained with eleven thousand against seven thousand. He remained on the ground one day, and then, returning to Amboy, he evacuated New Jersey entirely, and never entered it again. On the 30th of June, after his "two weeks fooling in New Jersey," as it was called in England, all his troops were taken over to Staten Island, and to the amazement of every one he began loading them on transports as if to leave America.

People in England were the more impatient with Howe because they expected the campaign of this year 1777 to be a very decisive one, which would make up for Trenton and Princeton and all the shortcomings of 1776. The Ministry were preparing to support Howe by an expedition sent down the Hudson from Canada which should meet at Albany a force under Howe coming up from New York. The water highway

<sup>a</sup> Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. v, pp. 436, 439, 440, 441, 445, 448, 450, 452-455. See also Galloway, "Letters to a Nobleman," &c., pp. 62, 67; "Remarks on General Burgoyne's State of the Expedition from Canada," p. 39, London, 1780; Stedman, "American War," vol. i, p. 238; Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. ii, pp. 460-474; "Life of George Reed," p. 268; Grahame, "Life of General Morgan," p. 124; Drake, "Life of General Knox," p. 44.

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of the Hudson and Lake Champlain was to pass over to British control throughout its whole length and the rebellious colonies were to be cut in half and prevented from supporting one another.

As the plan was worked out, two expeditions were to come from Canada; one under Burgoyne was to come straight down by way of Lake Champlain, and a smaller force under St. Leger was to go up the St. Lawrence to Lake Ontario as far as Oswego, capture Fort Stanwix, and sweep down the Mohawk Valley to reinforce Burgoyne at Albany. New York being peopled only along the lines of the Hudson and Mohawk Valleys, these two expeditions, reinforced by Howe from below, would be a complete conquest of New York. The plan also included an attack upon the coast of New England to prevent the militia and minute-men of that part of the country from being massed against Burgoyne as he came down from Canada.

Howe had full information as to this plan, professed to approve of it, and, in his letter to the colonial secretary on the 9th of October, 1776, spoke of it as "the primary object." It was evidently necessary and vital that he should play his part in it with vigor, or there would be a woful disaster to the British arms and great encouragement to the rebellion, as well as encouragement to France to ally herself with the patriots. In a letter to the Ministry of the 30th of November, 1776, Howe shows how he will carry out his part of the plan by sending 10,000 men to attack New England, 10,000 to go up the Hudson to Albany, and 8000 to make a diversion towards Philadelphia.<sup>4</sup>

This plan he gradually changed until nothing of it was left but the movement to Philadelphia. His reason for this change was that the Ministry would not send him sufficient reinforcements to carry out the plan. But this was hardly a sufficient excuse for refusing to send any assistance at all to Burgoyne. On the 5th of April, 1777, he wrote to Carleton in Canada that he would not assist Burgoyne, because it would be inconsistent

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<sup>4</sup>Parliamentary Register, House of Commons, 1779, vol. xi, pp. 261, 362; *American Archives*, fifth series, vol. iii, pp. 926, 1318.



## HOWE AND BURGoyNE

with other operations on which he had determined; that he would be in Pennsylvania when Burgoyne was advancing on Albany, and Burgoyne must take care of himself as best he could.<sup>6</sup>

A copy of this letter to Carleton was sent by Howe to the Ministry, and about a month afterwards the Ministry sent to Carleton instructions for sending Burgoyne to Albany, and directed that Burgoyne and St. Leger should communicate with Howe and receive instructions from him; that until they received instructions from him they should act as exigencies might require; "but that in so doing they must never lose sight of their intended junction with Sir William Howe as their principal object."<sup>6</sup>

A copy of these instructions from the Ministry to Carleton was sent to Howe for his guidance, and received by him on the 5th of July, so that as commander-in-chief with discretionary power he was made aware of the whole situation, knew the wishes and plans of the Ministry, and on him was placed the responsibility of effecting or not effecting a junction with Burgoyne.<sup>7</sup>

In accordance with the instruction from the Ministry, Burgoyne, before starting from England, wrote to Howe. He wrote to him again from Quebec, and again on the 2nd of July, when on his way down Lake Champlain, informing him of the nature of his expedition, that he was under orders to effect a junction, and that he expected support from the South. This letter of the 2nd of July Howe received on the 15th of July.<sup>8</sup>

In order that discretionary power and responsibility might be entirely cast upon Howe, Lord George Germain wrote to him, on the 18th of May, saying that the copy of Howe's letter

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<sup>6</sup> Parliamentary Register, House of Commons, 1770, vol. xi, p. 389.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 404.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 405, 407.

<sup>8</sup> Cobbett, "Parliamentary History," vol. xx, pp. 780, 788, 798; Parliamentary Register, House of Commons, 1770, vol. xiii, pp. 92, 93, 127-129.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

to Carleton changing the plan of a junction with Burgoyne had been received, and adding:

"As you must, from your situation and military skill, be a competent judge of the propriety of every plan, his Majesty does not hesitate to approve the alterations which you propose; trusting, however, that whatever you may meditate, it will be executed in time for you to co-operate with the army ordered to proceed from Canada, and put itself under your command." (Parliamentary Register, House of Commons, 1779, vol. xi, p. 416.)

This letter was received by Howe on the 16th of August, and on the 30th of August he replied to it, saying that he would not be able to coöperate with Burgoyne.<sup>9</sup> The correspondence was now closed; and this brief review of it may be of assistance in understanding the events which are to be related.

On the 17th of June, when Howe was manœuvring so strangely with Washington in New Jersey, Burgoyne started from Canada and began to fight his way down the lakes toward Albany. On the first of July, as we have just seen, Howe began to load his troops on transports; and the great question was what he would do next.

The strategical importance of the line of the Hudson and Lake Champlain to Canada was so well known in America, and it was so well known that England attached great importance to it, that every one supposed that Howe would move up towards Albany to assist the Canada expedition. On the 2nd of July, Washington learned that this Canada expedition was moving on Ticonderoga; and a few days afterwards he heard that Ticonderoga was taken.<sup>10</sup> This would seem to have been the nick of time for Howe to go to the support of Burgoyne; but Howe's movements were uncertain and mysterious. Sometimes he seemed about to go up the Hudson; at other times he appeared to be going into Long Island Sound to attack New England; and these uncertain movements continued during

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<sup>9</sup> Parliamentary Register, House of Commons, p. 418.

<sup>10</sup> Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. v, pp. 459, 461, 462, 467, 469, 472, 475, 501-503, 517, 520.

## HOWE LEAVES NEW YORK

nearly the whole month of July. His troops during all that time were kept on board the transports, and the whole fleet of nearly 300 vessels kept moving back and forth between New York and Sandy Hook.

Washington felt sure that he must intend to assist Burgoyne. It seemed impossible to think otherwise; impossible to suppose that his uncertain movements were anything but feints to cover his real design of effectually coöperating with the army from Canada. But, finally, after all his manœuvring, Howe on the 24th of July, took his force of 18,000 men out to sea. Clinton was left in command of New York with the rest of the British army, consisting of about 6000, a force entirely inadequate to hold New York and at the same time coöperate with Burgoyne and St. Leger.

Just before sailing from New York, Howe sent a letter to Burgoyne which he carefully arranged should fall into the hands of Washington, for he gave it to be carried by a patriot prisoner, whom he released and gave a large sum of money, as if he really believed that such a person would prove a faithful messenger. In this letter he said that he was making a feint at sea to the southward, but that his real intention was to sail to Boston, and from there assist Burgoyne at Albany.<sup>11</sup>

The letter was itself a feint. Howe's ships disappeared in the hot July haze that overhung the ocean, and for a week nothing more was heard of him. A Connecticut newspaper printed an advertisement offering a reward for a lost general.

Washington, who had separated his army into divisions for a rapid movement, now brought his force together at Coryell's Ferry, on the Delaware above Trenton, prepared to move quickly either to the Hudson or to Philadelphia; and he ordered careful watchers to be placed along the southern coast. He could not quite believe that Howe intended to abandon Bur-

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<sup>11</sup> Irving, "Washington," vol. iii, chap. xi; Marshall, "Washington," vol. iii, chap. iii; Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. v, p. 514. All of Howe's movements at this time will be found well described in Washington's Writings, Ford edition, vol. v, pp. 470, 522. See, also, Galloway, "Letters to a Nobleman," p. 73.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

goyne. But on the 30th of July the people living at Cape Henlopen, at the entrance of Delaware Bay, saw the ocean covered with a vast fleet of nearly three hundred transports and men-of-war; a beautiful but alarming sight as they sailed over that summer sea and anchored in the bay.

Washington now hurried his army to Philadelphia, and camped north of the town, near the Falls of the Schuylkill, on the line of what we have since known as Queen Lane, which runs into Germantown. This was the first appearance of the patriot army in mass at Philadelphia. Their sanitary arrangements, as Stewart's *Orderly Book* tells us, were particularly unfortunate on this occasion, and in that hot August weather a most horrible stench arose all round their camp.<sup>12</sup>

But within a day or two Howe sailed out of Delaware Bay. He decided, as he and his officers afterwards explained, that it was impracticable to go up the river to Philadelphia, because that city was defended by obstructions in the water, and the shores below were inconvenient for landing an army. Again he disappeared beyond the horizon, heading eastward, as if returning to New York with the intention of seizing the Highland passes on the Hudson and assisting Burgoyne by a sudden stroke.

Washington was now completely puzzled. Unwilling to march his army in the torrid heat, he held it in the unsavory camp at Queen Lane until reflection and increasing anxiety compelled him to move again towards the Hudson.

But he had not gone far when he was stopped by messengers. The people who lived by fishing and shooting wild fowl at Sinepuxent Inlet, below Cape Henlopen, had caught a glimpse one day of a vast forest of masts moving slowly to the southward, but quickly, as if conscious that they could be seen from the land, the masts disappeared again.

That was stranger than ever; and Washington thought that Howe might be making for Charleston, either to occupy it or to lead the patriot army into a long march in a hot and unhealthy

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<sup>12</sup> *Pennsylvania Magazine of History*, vol. xxii, p. 308.

## HOWE AT THE HEAD OF ELK

climate, and, having enticed them there, return quickly in his ships to any part of the middle or northern colonies, and easily and effectually coöperate with Burgoyne and St. Leger.<sup>13</sup>

But it was not Charleston's turn. Howe's progress was now very slow, for he was beating against head-winds. At last, on the 21st of August, he was reported sailing up Chesapeake Bay, and then all was clear. He landed in the Elk River, at the head of the bay, not far from the modern village of Elkton, then called Head of Elk. From there on the 8th of September he marched towards Philadelphia as a comfortable place in which to settle for the winter.

In order to place himself beyond the possibility of assisting Burgoyne, he had made a circuitous voyage, of three hundred miles, which became a thousand, beating against the head-winds, and a march of fifty miles by land, to reach a place from which he was less than one hundred miles by land when he started. Every one was astonished. When he was working his way up Chesapeake Bay and as far as possible from Lake Champlain, Burgoyne was meeting with his first reverses and lost the Battle of Bennington on the 16th of August. Every patriot was praying that Howe might live long to command the British armies.<sup>14</sup>

When it was known that he was about to land at the head of the Chesapeake, Washington hurried across the country to place his army between the enemy and Philadelphia. On this march he paraded a large part of his force through Philadelphia, coming down Front Street and marching out Chestnut Street and across the Schuylkill. He wished to encourage the patriots in the town by this display, and, as the loyalists had been saying that there was no patriot army, he would in this way impress its size upon them.

The greatest pains were taken with this parade. Earnest appeals were made to the troops to keep in step and avoid

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<sup>13</sup> Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. vi, p. 46.

<sup>14</sup> Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. vi, p. 48; "Life of Timothy Pickering," p. 150.



## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

straggling. The axemen or pioneers headed the procession, and the divisions were well spread out, with fifes and drums between them rattling away at marching tunes. To give some uniformity to the motley hunting-shirts, bare feet, and rags, every man wore a green sprig in his hat. The best-clothed men were the Virginians, and the smartest-looking troops were Smallwood's Marylanders.

But they all looked like fighting men as they marched by to destroy Howe's prospects of a winter in Philadelphia. With the policy Howe was consistently pursuing, it might have been just as well to offer no obstacle to his taking Philadelphia. He merely intended to pass the winter there as he had done in Boston and New York. But for the credit of the patriot cause and his own reputation, Washington had to do all in his power to stop him. It would not do to hang on his rear and flanks and annoy him in guerilla fashion. The patriots must fight a pitched battle, and in such a battle the chances were, of course, largely against them, for they had only eleven thousand badly equipped troops with which to oppose Howe's eighteen thousand regulars.<sup>15</sup>

It was about this time that the Marquis Lafayette, a youth of twenty years, joined the patriot army;<sup>16</sup> and he gives us in his *Memoirs* a description, already quoted, of its ragged appearance and lack of drill and discipline. There were already some French officers in our army and many had offered themselves to our commissioners in France and had been sent out to America. Some of them travelled with a retinue of servants and stipulated for high rank and favorable conditions. Du Coudray insisted on the rank and pay of a major-general, to be second in command to Washington and to be pensioned for life. Lafayette, the best of them all, offered to serve entirely at his own expense and insisted on beginning as a volunteer. Talley-

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<sup>15</sup> Bancroft estimates Howe's force at over twenty thousand without counting the engineer corps. ("History of the United States," edition of 1886, vol. v, p. 175.)

<sup>16</sup> Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. vi, p. 48 note.

## LAFAYETTE'S ARRIVAL

rand and other critics have described Lafayette as lacking in force of mind and ability. But he was eminently useful to the American cause. Washington was strongly attracted by his courageous and romantic disposition, and gave him every opportunity to distinguish himself.

He had offered himself to our commissioners the year before in France. But immediately afterwards news arrived of Washington's defeat at Long Island and retreat across New Jersey. Our credit sank so low that the commissioners could not charter a vessel to take Lafayette to America, and they discouraged his going. But he said that now was the time for him to serve their cause when it was at its lowest ebb. He purchased and fitted out a ship for himself, and in spite of the protests of his family and the prohibition of the French Government, escaped to a Spanish port, from which he sailed for America.<sup>17</sup>

After a voyage of fifty-four days he reached the coast of South Carolina on the 13th of June, 1777; and, not knowing where they were, the ship anchored at the entrance of Winyah Bay, which leads up to Georgetown. Taking the ship's yawl and a crew to row, Lafayette penetrated into the bay until the tide turned against him, when negro oystermen took him into their sail-boat and at midnight landed him at Major Huger's summer residence.<sup>18</sup>

When the first alarm at what was thought to be a British raiding party was over, Lafayette was received with a southern welcome which he never forgot. He woke up next morning amazed and delighted with his strange semi-tropical surroundings, the mosquito nets, the innumerable black slaves anxious to wait on him, and the ease and romance of the summer home of one of those planters of whom so much had been heard in Europe. The ardent young Frenchman was filled with enthusiasm at this first sight of the continent of liberty.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> On the general subject of foreign officers in the patriot army see Tower's "Lafayette;" Wharton's *Diplomatic Correspondence*; Pontgibaud, "A Volunteer of the War of Independence," pp. 70, 105, 120, 202.

<sup>18</sup> Huger was a South Carolina Huguenot name pronounced Ugee.

<sup>19</sup> Tower, "Lafayette in the American Revolution," vol. i, p. 171.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

He was no doubt a cheerful and refreshing addition to Washington's official family, as through the torrid heat of early September the army moved down towards Howe's army. Lafayette thought that Howe should have been attacked while he was landing. But he was at the same time obliged to admit that the patriot army was not well enough organized for a bold attack upon regulars and had better confine itself to fighting on the defensive.

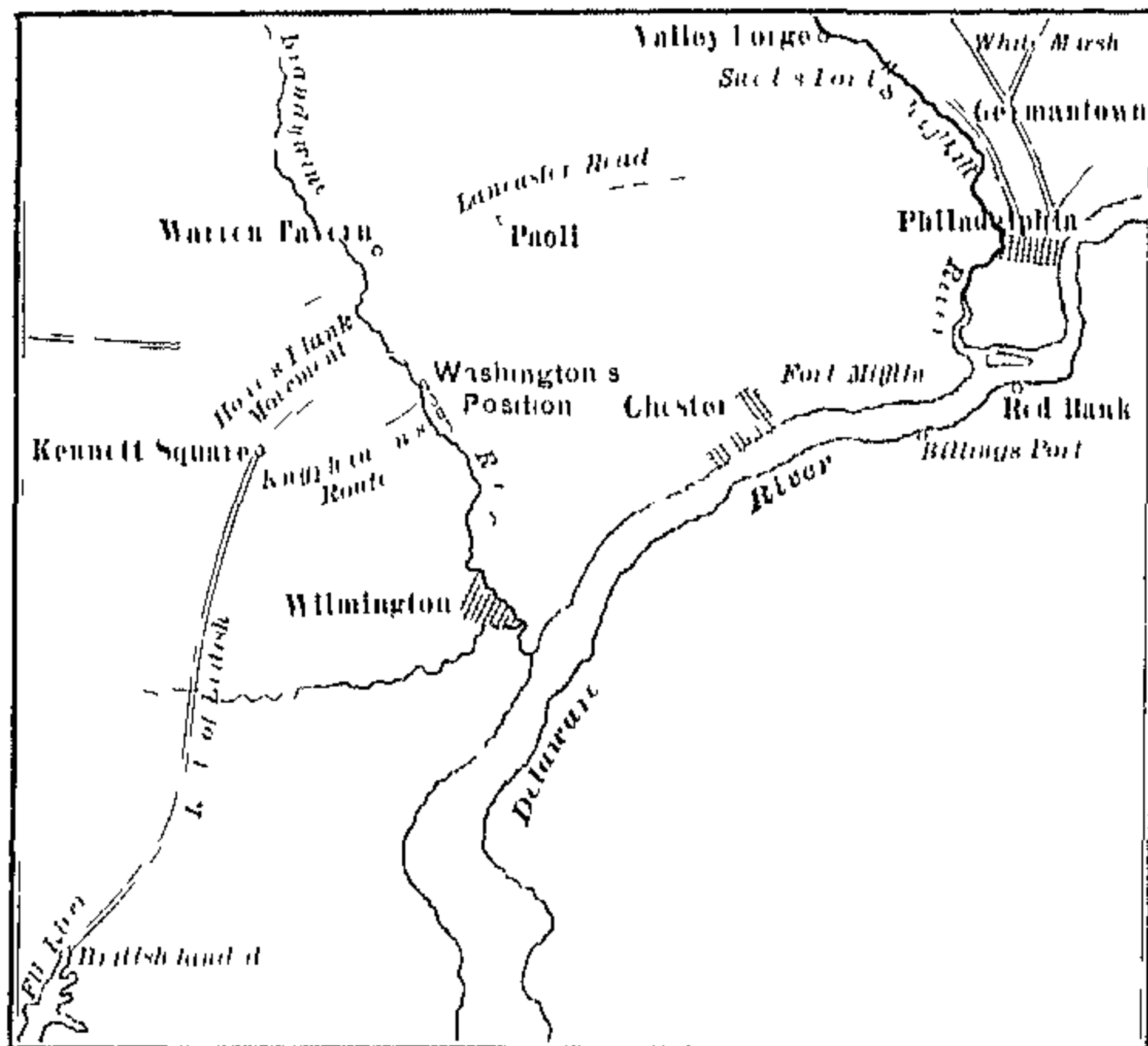
While Howe's army lay at the Head of Elk, through which the Pennsylvania Railroad from Philadelphia to Baltimore now passes, Washington, accompanied by Greene and Lafayette, with some aids went forward to reconnoitre. They reached the neighborhood of the British and rode up to the tops of Gray Hill and Iron Hill, the only two elevations in that generally level country. They could see nothing but a few tents in the distance and were returning when they were caught in a thunder squall with heavy rain, which compelled them to seek shelter for the night in the farmhouse of a person who they afterwards learned was a loyalist. It was one of those curious circumstances which sometimes alter the course of history; for the loyalist could have informed the British and Washington might have been captured exactly as Lee was taken the year before. The next morning, as they set spurs to their horses at the first break of day, Washington is said to have admitted that they had been very imprudent and had had a lucky escape. The narrowness of the escape seems to have become known and he received a friendly caution from Virginia to be more careful in the future.<sup>20</sup>

The British army started from the Head of Elk on the 8th of September and moved northward through a strongly loyalist region with patriot skirmishing parties annoying their flanks. Among these skirmishers was a young cavalry captain from Virginia, who distinguished himself for the first time by the

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<sup>20</sup> *Memoirs and Correspondence of Lafayette*, London edition, 1837, vol. i, p. 20; G. W. Greene, "Life of General Greene," vol. i, p. 443; *Writings of Washington*, Ford edition, vol. vi, pp. 53, 147.





MAP OF THE BATTLE OF THE BRANDYWINE



## PLANS OF THE GENERALS

number of prisoners he made. It was that accomplished officer who afterwards was known as Light Horse Harry Lee, a brother it was said, of an old sweetheart of Washington and the father of General Robert Lee of the Civil War of 1861.<sup>21</sup>

In order to discover if possible the plans and intentions of the enemy, Washington at first took a position directly in their path on Red Clay Neck, not far from Wilmington, with his left on Christiana Creek and his right extending towards Chadd's Ford. But the British seemed inclined to pass round him and press on to Philadelphia without giving battle. Howe seemed anxious to reach the Brandywine River unmolested, and having crossed it to press on to the Schuylkill, which if he could cross without interference, would give him an easy entrance into Philadelphia. Those two rivers were the only natural obstacles which protected the town, and it seemed as if a battle would be fought at each of them.<sup>22</sup>

Howe did not seem to be seeking a battle, and apparently had no desire to use his numerical superiority in defeating the patriot army, but was merely trying to cross the two rivers as quickly and safely as possible, and reach his winter quarters in the town.

The method of defence which Washington must adopt was now perfectly clear. He must dispute the crossing of those two rivers, for there his enemy would be weakest and the patriot chances of success at their best. He accordingly fell back to the Brandywine, crossed it and took up a position with his centre at Chadd's Ford and the river between him and the enemy. His left wing, under Armstrong, extended about a mile and a half down the river, and his right, under Sullivan, extended about two miles up the river, so that he covered nearly four miles of frontage on the river.

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<sup>21</sup> Galloway's examination before Parliament; G. W. Greene, "Life of General Greene," vol. i, p. 446; *Writings of Washington*, Ford edition, vol. vi, pp. 57, 58, 62, 65, 66.

<sup>22</sup> *Writings of Washington*, Ford edition, vol. vi, p. 67; Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1784, vol. ii, p. 495.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

General Greene appears to have thought that a better plan would have been to stay on the same side of the Brandywine with Howe, wait till he began to cross and then attack him in the flank, which would prevent a regular pitched battle and give an easy chance for retreat. But this plan was rejected, and the one adopted by Washington has been generally supposed to have been the best and all that he could do.<sup>24</sup>

It is an elementary principle that an inferior force, placed in a strong position like that of Washington at Brandywine, with a river in front of it, and acting on the defensive, can resist the attack of a much superior force, if the superior force is content to attack in front. It is also equally elementary that the best policy for the superior force is not to confine itself to a front attack, but to use its greater numbers in flanking.

Howe fought only two battles of his own in this war, Long Island and Brandywine, both of which were absolutely necessary to enable him to get into towns for the winter; and he fought them both by flanking. He would probably have fought Bunker Hill in the same way if he had been allowed to use his own judgment. Knowing thoroughly the composition of the patriot army, the inadequacy of its staff, and its inability to obtain quick and sure information on the field, the flank movement was for him both obvious and easy.

At Brandywine he sent Knyphausen, on the morning of the 11th of September, to make a violent attack on Washington's front and centre, while, under cover of the early morning fog, he and Cornwallis took the rest of the army far up the Brandywine and crossed it by one of the fords, with the intention of coming down with irresistible force upon Washington's right.

A young man of the neighborhood, who wandered among the British troops, as non-combatants, whether patriots or loyalists, were allowed to do, has left a brief but rather interesting account of what he saw. He described Howe and Cornwallis as very large, heavy men, mounted on horses

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<sup>24</sup> G. W. Greene, "Life of Nathanael Greene," vol. i, p. 464 note.

## SULLIVAN'S MISTAKE

exhausted by the long sea-voyage. He watched the troops piling their blankets and knapsacks in the fields when preparing to fight, and he noticed their fresh-looking, smooth faces in strong contrast to the 'sunburnt' Americans to whom he was accustomed. The subordinate officers he described as short, portly men, with very delicate white skins.<sup>24</sup>

During the morning the American army learned of Howe's flanking movement from messengers sent by General Sullivan, who commanded the right wing up the river; and Washington at once prepared to make what is often the counter-stroke to such a flanking movement. He intended to send a large part of his force under Greene to pass down along the river, concealed by the woods, cross the river and strike Knyphausen in the rear. At the same time Washington was to lead in person an attack on Knyphausen's front, while Sullivan held the flanking movement in check. If all this was successful Washington would be in the position of having divided Howe's army in half, defeated one division of it and placed the river between himself and the other division. By a similar counter-stroke, Napoleon, when his right flank was being turned, brought victory out of defeat at Austerlitz.

Washington, if his counter-stroke had succeeded, would also have had a brilliant victory. But when Sullivan was about to move forward to attack and check the flanking movement, a certain Major Spears rides up with the information that there is no appearance of the British flanking movement, and this is confirmed soon afterwards by a sergeant of the light horse sent out to explore. Sullivan immediately, without further investigation, sent this information back to Washington. It changed all his plans; and Greene was at once recalled from crossing the river to attack Knyphausen.

It was not long, however, after the last information reached Washington before the whole British flanking movement in two columns had crossed the river and was moving down upon the troops under Sullivan. Stirling was attacked first, and Sulli-

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<sup>24</sup> Bulletin, Pennsylvania Historical Society, vol. v, p. 23.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

van, in hastening to his assistance, took such a roundabout way that he arrived too late. When he attempted to form his own troops they were thrown into confusion by the overwhelming numbers of the British and retreated precipitately.

Greene's division, consisting of Muhlenberg's and Weedon's brigades, all Virginians except Stewart's Pennsylvania regiment, came forward rapidly to save Sullivan's retreat, which was now a rout. This was the first appearance of any considerable body of troops from so far south as Virginia in an important battle of the Revolution. They opened their ranks to let the fugitives through, and then selecting a narrow opening or pass with woods on both sides held it for an hour and a half against the heavy odds of the enemy.

Weedon was an inn-keeper from Fredericksburg, Virginia, and Muhlenberg was a Lutheran preacher from the same state. Both of them were the sort of men the patriots were greatly ridiculed for placing in high command. But under Greene's direction, they checked the British advance and prevented panic and confusion.

It was now sunset, and Knyphausen, finding that the flanking movement was succeeding, had crossed the river and compelled the rest of the American force to retreat as best it could from the ford. The American army was now in what Lafayette described as a very disorderly retreat, "fugitives, cannon, and baggage crowded without order into the road;" but favored by the darkness of the night they retired to Chester, on the Delaware River.

Various accounts of the losses on each side have been given; and our people at first claimed to have inflicted greater loss than they suffered. Howe reported his loss at 90 killed and 488 wounded, and the American loss in killed, wounded, and missing was estimated at about 1200.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. ii, p. 509; W. B. Reed, "Life of Joseph Reed," vol. i, pp. 305, 307; "Life of George Read," pp. 271, 272; G. W. Greene, "Life of Nathanael Greene," vol. i, p. 447; Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. vi, p. 71; Almon's

## HOWE'S ACCURACY AND SKILL

The accuracy of Howe's flanking movement, its complete success and the absence of mistakes were a credit to his skill, and showed the superior organization of his army. The numerous loyalists of that part of the country had no doubt given him full information of the patriot position. The patriots, on the other hand, could obtain no reliable information from the inhabitants, and had so few and such insufficient cavalry that they could make no extended and rapid explorations. The British flank movement crossed the river by an upper ford of which Sullivan, who was supposed to be guarding in that direction, had never heard.

This Sullivan who learned of the flanking movement too late at Brandywine, was the same Sullivan who had failed to know of the flanking movement in time at Long Island. His *forte* did not lie in protecting an army's flank. Washington acquitted him of all blame at Brandywine; and said that he could have done no more than he did. But a large part of the patriot public never forgave him and insisted that he should have made further investigations or have gone in person to see if Spears and the sergeant were right in their report.<sup>20</sup>

The easy confidence and the effortless manner with which Howe secured these two victories of Long Island and Brandywine was a striking circumstance and set people wondering why he did not do more, why he did not crush and annihilate his enemy and end the war that summer. "Howe always succeeded," said Galloway, "in every attack he thought proper to make, as far as he chose to succeed."

Military critics, like Du Portail and Stedman, as well as political pamphleteers in England, and among the loyalists,

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Remembrances, vol. v, p. 400; Muhlenberg, "Life of Muhlenberg;" St. Clair Papers, vol. i, p. 97; Memoirs and Correspondence of Lafayette, London, edition 1837, vol. i, p. 24; Octavius Pickering, "Life of Timothy Pickering," p. 155 note; Drake, "Life of General Knox," p. 48; Howe, "Observations upon a Pamphlet Entitled Letters to a Nobleman," p. 98.

<sup>20</sup> For a vindication of Sullivan see *American Historical Magazine* for December, 1866; Proceedings Massachusetts Historical Society, 1866-67, p. 380; Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. ii, p. 73 note.



## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

were all agreed that Howe now had a good opportunity of exterminating the patriot army. He should have followed up the retreating patriots, they said, the day after Brandywine, while they were still demoralized. He could have crowded them into the triangle formed by the Delaware and Schuylkill rivers, and if they attempted to escape across the Schuylkill attack them in the act of crossing.

"If the English," said Du Portail, "had followed their advantage that day, Washington's army would have been spoken of no more." But Howe would not do it. He seemed to be entirely satisfied with himself, showed no anxiety as to the fate of Burgoyne, no hurry to reach Philadelphia, and for several weeks lay encamped in a pleasant situation on high ground within a few miles of the battlefield, and let his men wash their clothes. He seemed to be waiting for the weather to grow cooler before he took possession of the hot city.<sup>27</sup>

If he had pursued Washington, it was said, and inflicted a crushing defeat he might have left part of his force to occupy Philadelphia and marched the rest to the assistance of Burgoyne. This was what the Ministry expected when they heard of the Philadelphia expedition, and it would have made that expedition an intelligent movement.<sup>28</sup> They also expected that Howe would have at least sent a force into New England to prevent the militia of that region being massed against Burgoyne. As he had neglected to do this, and neglected to leave a sufficient force with Clinton to assist Burgoyne, it was to little purpose that he argued that he had sufficiently assisted Burgoyne by withdrawing Washington's army to Philadelphia.

As Washington had at most only 11,000, and Howe 18,000, and later 20,000, it was rather Washington drawing away Howe's army. This 18,000 were ill used in drawing away 11,000, when they left Clinton so weak that he could not assist

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<sup>27</sup> Galloway, "A Reply to the Observations of General Howe," p. 111; Stedman, "American War," edition 1794, vol. i, pp. 293, 294; Jones, "New York in the Revolution," vol. i, p. 197.

<sup>28</sup> "Remarks on General Burgoyne's State of the Expedition from Canada," p. 37, London, 1780.



## FAILURE TO HELP BURGOYNE

Burgoyne, and when none were spared from them to make a diversion on the New England coast. The most effective way to have kept Washington's army from going against Burgoyne would have been for Howe to have placed himself between Washington and Burgoyne. But by going far away to Philadelphia he gave Washington a chance to detach some of his forces and send them against Burgoyne. As General Robertson put it in his testimony before the committee of inquiry, the movement of Howe to Philadelphia was a diversion, but a more powerful diversion in favor of Burgoyne would have been to go straight up the Hudson to his assistance.<sup>29</sup>

Howe's excuse that it would have been impossible for him to reach Burgoyne with Washington's force blocking the way on the Hudson at the Highland passes seems inadequate in view of Clinton's success at those passes with a very small force. Washington dreaded nothing so much as Howe's army going up the Hudson with its superior numbers and its numerous ships, while he would have had to follow it by land through a difficult mountainous country and draw his supplies from long distances to the southward. Howe could have sailed up the Hudson faster than Washington could have moved by land; and Washington was supremely pleased when he found that his enemy had gone to the Chesapeake.

If Howe had used his fleet to take him up the Hudson he could afterwards have used a part of it for the vital service of an attack on New England. But to spend the whole force of the fleet and of three-fourths of his army in a long expedition by sea to the Chesapeake at the very moment that Burgoyne most needed assistance, and leave him without any assistance at all, was condemned by all military men of that time except two or three of Howe's subordinates.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Burgoyne, "State of the Expedition from Canada," Appendix No. 10.

<sup>30</sup> Anburey, "Travels," vol. ii, pp. 26-30.

## LV.

### THE STRUGGLE FOR THE SCHUYLKILL

THE day after the Battle of Brandywine, Washington collected the remains of his force and proceeded along the Delaware to the Schuylkill, which he crossed, and occupied his former camp on Queen Lane, in Germantown, seven miles north of Philadelphia. He was thus in a position to dispute Howe's crossing of the Schuylkill, which was a deeper river than the Brandywine, and had high bluffs which rendered the crossing of it in the face of an opposing force a very serious matter. By not pursuing Washington's army, Howe had thus given it a chance to fight another battle in what might be a much improved position.

One of Washington's strongest traits was his ability to hold his men together after a defeat, and reanimate their spirits. His wounded had been distributed among various villages; and Lafayette, who had been slightly wounded in the foot, was sent to Bethlehem, on the Lehigh River, to be cared for by the Moravians. Several foreign officers besides Lafayette had distinguished themselves; and conspicuous among them was Count Pulaski, a Polish nobleman and a superb horseman. The Congress now made him a commander of cavalry in order to encourage and develop that arm which heretofore had amounted to little or nothing in the patriot service.

Washington remained at Germantown not much more than a day. His object in going there seems to have been to arrange for defending the Schuylkill fords, rest his men, and see what Howe intended to do. As he found Howe was not moving towards him, he placed part of his force at the different fords of the Schuylkill from the Falls up to Norristown; and taking with him the main body of his army crossed the river and went to look for Howe, who was still encamped near the battlefield of Brandywine.

## WARREN TAVERN

It was a movement which has never been satisfactorily explained and was certainly not lacking in boldness, for Washington had with him not more than 9000 men, as against Howe's 18,000. One would at first suppose that Washington would watch from a distance, and as soon as the British advanced toward the Schuylkill fall back to that river as he fell back to the Brandywine and make a final stand on it. But possibly Washington was uneasy about the patriot military stores at Reading and thought it his duty to place himself between them and Howe. These stores were considered of vital importance and influenced many of Washington's movements at this time. Howe could easily have destroyed the stores the day after Brandywine. But whatever Washington's reason may have been he now went straight towards the enemy with the intention, as he said, "of attacking them either in front or on their flank," and as he adds, "with a prospect of success."<sup>1</sup>

On the 17th of September the two armies approached each other a little west of Paoli, at the Warren Tavern. It was certainly an unusual spectacle for a small defeated army to return to the victor, and standing in front of him, dare him to fight. One would naturally expect that there would be as serious a conflict as at the Battle of the Brandywine, for the American force was not protected by a stream or any natural obstacle. One would also naturally suppose that Howe would have welcomed such an opportunity to crush his enemy.

He was indeed advancing towards the Americans, and Wayne was sent forward to skirmish and check the advance until the American line of battle could be formed. This line was first formed without any protection in front of it, and with a wet valley or pond in the rear, which would have interfered with retreat. Greene and Pickering called Washington's attention to their danger, and the line was changed to the high ground on the other side, so that the wet valley lay between the Americans and the British. But there was nothing apparently to prevent Howe turning either or both the American

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<sup>1</sup> Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. vi, p. 76.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

flanks in his favorite manner. It was certainly heroic of Washington and his officers to take this risk with their small defeated force.

At almost the last moment the sky, which had been overcast, became black with storm, and presently the rain descended in torrents, which continued the rest of the day and all night. Such a catastrophe of nature in those times reduced the fire-arms of an army to mere clubs; for the powder in the pans of the locks would not explode, and the paper cartridges of powder were also useless. No battle was fought, and at night the Americans retreated through the drenching rain, with the intention, Washington says, of going only a few miles to dry their ammunition, clean their guns, and return to the enemy. But he found that nearly all his ammunition was ruined by the rain and the guns so unfit for service, that he kept on retreating to a strong position on some high ground extending from Valley Forge, on the Schuylkill, towards an old and now forgotten summer resort, called the Yellow Springs.<sup>2</sup>

When the news of this fiasco reached England, torrents of abuse were poured out on Howe for his loss of such an opportunity to annihilate the rebel army, which his critics said could have been scattered and routed with the bayonet alone; and, as the British soldiers could not shoot well and the bayonet was their favorite weapon, why not use it on this occasion, when the powder of the Americans was spoiled and their marksmanship of no avail? But both in his "Narrative" and in his report of the affair Howe describes the Americans as retreating precipitately before his army reached them; and perhaps Washington, finding his powder wet, saw that he must retreat at once before the enemy came nearer.

Washington had left Wayne with a small force to watch

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<sup>2</sup> Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. vi, pp. 77, 81, 83; Galloway, "Letters to a Nobleman on the Conduct of the War," p. 76 note; G. W. Greene, "Life of Nathanael Greene," vol. i, p. 461; Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. ii, p. 515; "Life of Pickering," pp. 159, 162; Parliamentary Register, House of Commons, 1779, vol. xii, p. 428.

## PAOLI MASSACRE

the British, and harass their rear if they moved towards the Schuylkill. Wayne's letters and reports, full of his usual confidence, imply that he believed a successful attack could be made on the enemy; and in one letter he says he had so successfully concealed his troops that the British were entirely unaware of his presence, although he watched all their movements and could see them cooking and washing their clothes. He was woefully mistaken; and it shows how absurd it was to suppose that the British through their spies and the loyalists did not know all that went on among the patriots.

On the night of the 20th of September a party of British, under General Grey, rushed suddenly upon Wayne's fifteen hundred men, encamped near the Paoli Inn. Grey, whose only distinction in the war was in prisoner-killing, had recently arrived in America. He compelled his men, it is said, to draw the loads from their muskets and take the flints from the hammers, a method which at that time was supposed to be very effective for a night attack. He was ever afterwards known among the patriots as No-Flint Grey. But his men must have reloaded some of the guns, for, according to Wayne's account, there was considerable firing on both sides.

Wayne was not surprised, as has been generally supposed. He had been warned of the attack by a person in the neighborhood whose servant had overheard the British discussing it. He was accordingly well prepared, resisted gallantly, and was able to retire, saving his artillery and stores. Grey committed, it is said, most ruthless slaughter with sword and bayonet on those he first came upon, killing sixty and wounding over two hundred. It was generally regarded as such an excessive massacre of men who had surrendered that it amounted to prisoner-killing.<sup>a</sup>

Washington's bold manœuvres, whatever may have been his intention, had no effect in deterring Howe from attempting to cross the Schuylkill River. On the contrary, they encour-

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<sup>a</sup> W. B. Reed, "Life of Joseph Reed," vol. i, note pp. 312, 313; *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, vol. i, p. 285; Correspondence of Henry Laurens, p. 63; Stillé, "Life of Wayne," pp. 82-81.



## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

aged him to do it; for the patriot force was off to the side and presented no obstacle between the British and the river. We find that immediately after the Paoli massacre, as it was called, Howe moved towards the Schuylkill to cross it and enter Philadelphia.

There was much discussion among Washington's officers as to the best plan of resistance. Greene again put forward his suggestion of remaining on the same side of the river with Howe and attacking him in the flank as soon as he began to cross. In this way Greene thought that, with comparatively little risk, a crippling blow could be delivered which might save Philadelphia. Subsequent events seemed to indicate that in this instance of the Schuylkill, Greene's method might have been the better course to pursue. But a council of war decided to defend the Schuylkill in exactly the same way that the defence of the Brandywine had been attempted; and the patriot army accordingly crossed to the Philadelphia side, officers and men wading the fords where the water was up to their breasts, and marching during the cool damp night to their various stations along the left bank.<sup>4</sup>

The Schuylkill, because it was larger and had high banks, seemed easier to defend than the Brandywine; and if the British should attempt to cross it as they had crossed the Brandywine, a severe battle was naturally to be expected, with better chances of success for the Americans. But there were so many fords on the Schuylkill that if the British could manœuvre suddenly to a ford and be unmolested for an hour or two, they would have a good opportunity to cross. Howe seems to have looked at it in this way, and he was again entirely equal to the occasion. Instead of attempting to cross immediately or use any of the strategy he had employed at the Brandywine, he began to march his whole force up the right bank as if moving on the patriot supplies at Reading, while Washington followed along the opposite bank, keeping even pace with the

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<sup>4</sup> G. W. Greene, "Life of Nathanael Greene," vol. i, pp. 463-465; Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. vi, p. 80.



## WASHINGTON CRITICISED

British, when, by a sudden and totally unexpected backward movement, Howe slipped a sufficient force over Flatland's and Gordon's fords to protect his crossing. Before Washington was aware of it, nearly the whole British army crossed at midnight without having to fire a shot or lose a man.<sup>6</sup>

It was the cleverest piece of work that Howe ever did, and entirely in accord with what seemed to be his plan of carrying on the war by occupying posts and cities and fighting as few battles and losing as few men as possible.

Washington was, of course, criticised for allowing the crossing to happen in such a way, and again we hear complaints of his want of decision and his over-reliance on the opinions of others in councils of war; and these unjust attacks upon his ability increased more than ever during the next few months. On the nights when the two armies were keeping even pace with each other up opposite banks of the Schuylkill, General Greene and Colonel Pickering watered their horses together as they crossed the Perkiomen.

"General Greene," said Pickering, "before I came to the army, I entertained an exalted opinion of General Washington's military talents, but I have since seen nothing to enhance it."

In relating the incident, Pickering said that his opinion of Washington had been sensibly lowered; but he did not like to state it to Greene as strongly as he felt. Greene, however, understood what was meant, for he instantly replied:

"Why, the general does want decision; for my part I decide in a moment."<sup>7</sup>

Washington's explanation of the misfortune at the Schuylkill was that he could not prevent it; that Howe's movement towards the stores at Reading compelled the patriot army to hasten to their rescue, for the loss of those stores "must have proved our ruin." Being obliged to follow the British army

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<sup>6</sup> Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. vi, pp. 82, 84; Drake, "Life of General Knox," p. 50.

<sup>7</sup> G. W. Greene, "Life of General Greene," vol. i, p. 468.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

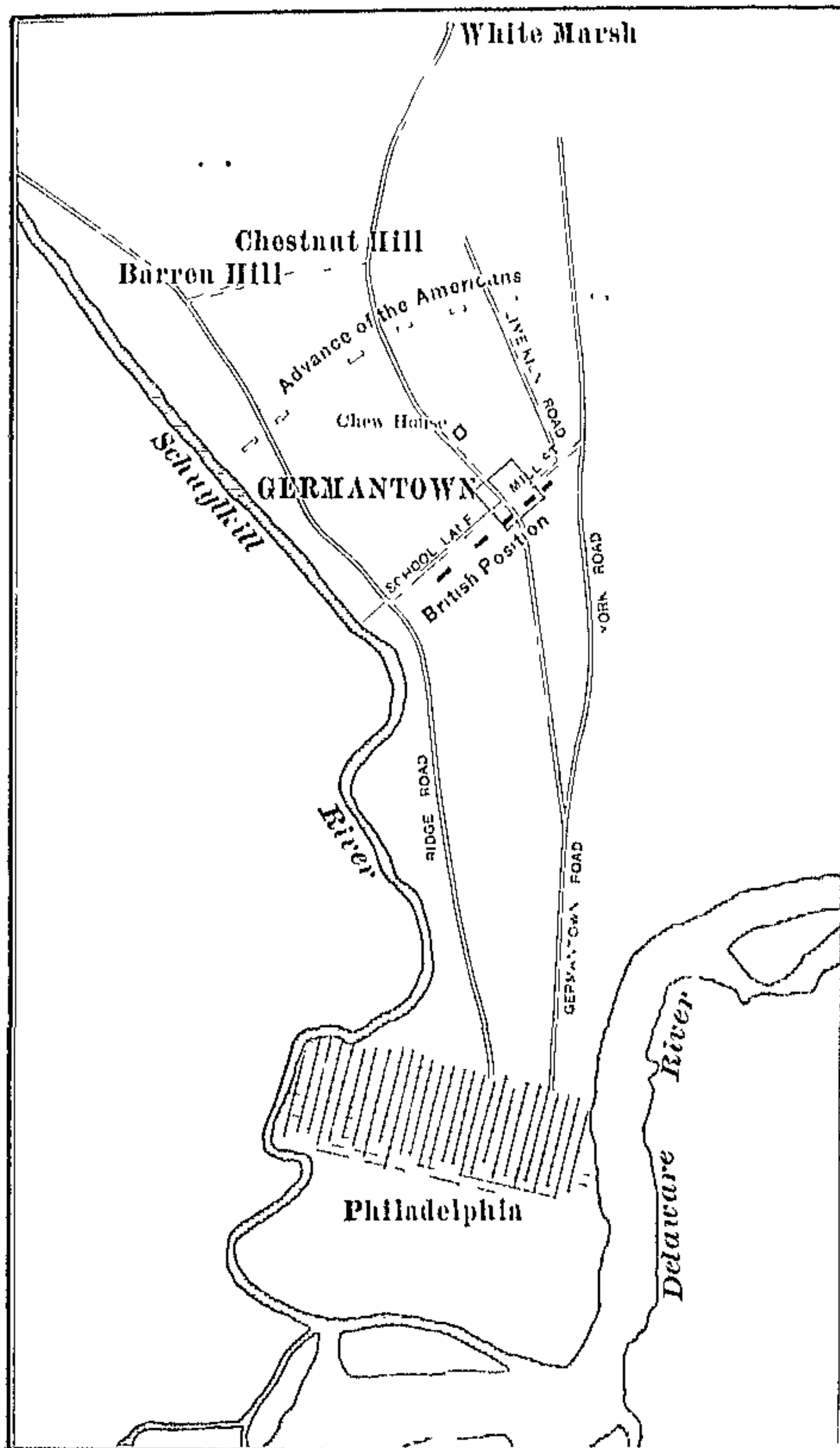
in order to save the stores, he could obtain no information of Howe's backward movement in the darkness in time to act against it, because all the people in that part of the country were loyalists. It was also at this time that he reported a thousand of his men marching bare-footed. The loyalism of that part of Pennsylvania was so strong that although it was invaded by the British there were not 2000 of the Pennsylvania patriot militia assisting Washington, and Pickering describes the patriot army as "in an enemy's country." This was in striking contrast to the situation in New England, where 17,000 militia had turned out to save Boston from the British.<sup>7</sup>

Washington certainly used councils of war and relied on them to an unusual extent, even when they decided against his own judgment. To men like Greene, who afterwards in his campaigns in the South was notorious for independent action, this submission of everything to a council seemed a waste of time. But there was method in Washington's reliance on councils. He probably felt that in conducting such a war it was all-important for him to keep in accord with public opinion in order to hold together the patriot party and attach to the cause every possible clique and interest; and to him the council of war represented public opinion in the patriot party. In this way he humored hostile factions by allowing them to take a hand in shaping events, and prevented the growth of any feeling that he was aiming to be a dictator. Almost everything was done by consultation; and he seems to have encouraged his officers when away from him to consult among themselves as to the movements they should make.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Irving, "Life of Washington," vol. iii, chap. 19; Baker, "Itinerary of Washington," p. 92; Niles, "Principles and Acts of the Revolution," edition 1876, p. 250; Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. vi, p. 126; "Life of Pickering," pp. 163, 164, 175.

<sup>8</sup> Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. vi, pp. 87, 88.



MAP OF THE BATTLE OF GERMANTOWN



## LVI.

### THE BATTLE OF GERMANTOWN

PHILADELPHIA was lost to the patriots. The Congress had fled; church bells and valuable patriot property had been removed; and on the 26th of September, part of the British army, under Cornwallis, marched into the town in grand display, the bands playing and the Hessians, with their up-turned moustaches, scowling in the most terrible manner.

Meanwhile, Washington's force encamped near Penni-becker's Mill, on the Perkiomen, to await developments and see what method the British would adopt for protecting themselves in Philadelphia.<sup>1</sup> Within a few days it was discovered that while Cornwallis occupied the city with part of the British force, Howe had formed a strong outpost, under his own personal command, at Germantown, seven miles north of Philadelphia. The object of this outpost, as Howe afterwards explained, was to control the main roads leading towards the American army, and deter Washington from interfering with another British detachment which had gone to attack the forts on the Delaware below the city.

The enemy being thus broken up into three divisions, one in Philadelphia, one at Germantown, and one down the river and some two thousand reinforcements having arrived at the patriot camp, it was decided by one of Washington's councils of war to attack the nearest division at Germantown. This division had no fortifications of any kind for their protection, and four convenient roads led directly towards them.

The British were camped along School Lane and Mill Street at right angles to the four roads; and the plan of battle was that the central road or main street of Germantown should be used for attacking the British centre, the next road eastward,

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<sup>1</sup> Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. vi, pp. 87, 93.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

known as the Limekiln Road, for turning their right flank, and the two extreme outer roads, the York Road, on the east, and the Ridge Road, on the west, for throwing two forces in their rear. Sullivan commanded on the main road against their centre; Greene had the Limekiln Road for turning their right flank; Smallwood had the York Road, on the east, for getting in their rear, and Armstrong the Ridge Road, on the west, for the same purpose. Washington, as commander, went with Sullivan's division in the centre.

The plan has generally been regarded as a good one, except that it was rather too elaborate and widespread to be carried out by a badly organized army. But that army cheerfully set out to execute it about eight o'clock in the evening of the 3rd of October, and, marching all night, were close to the enemy at sunrise. Unfortunately everything was obscured by a dense fog, so that objects were scarcely discernible at fifty yards.

Sullivan's division on the main road came upon the British outpost at Mount Airy; and Wayne's men attacked it in the most vigorous manner, capturing the encampment and tents and, according to Wayne's account, using their bayonets so effectively that the British fled in the utmost confusion. His men, he said, remembered the massacre of their comrades two weeks before at Paoli, "and took ample vengeance for that night's work."

"Our officers exerted themselves to save many of the poor wretches who were crying for mercy, but to little purpose, the rage and fury of the soldiers were not to be restrained for some time, at least not until great numbers of the enemy fell by their bayonets." (W. B. Reed, "Life of Joseph Reed," vol. i, p. 320.)

But part of this Fortieth British regiment, which Wayne's men were punishing so severely, seems to have thrown itself into the large mansion house of Chief Justice Chew, and used its windows and heavy stone walls as a fortification. While Wayne pressed on after the rest of the regiment there was a discussion between Washington and some of his officers whether this house should be passed or reduced. Knox urged



## GREENE'S SUCCESS

the military rule, never to leave a fortress of the enemy in your rear; and Reed replied, "What! call this a fort and lose the happy moment?" Unfortunately, Knox's opinion prevailed, and nearly half the American army was for some time uselessly delayed around this massive residence of the half-loyalist chief justice of Pennsylvania.<sup>2</sup>

Meanwhile, Greene had succeeded in turning the British right and was forcing his way along Mill Street towards the British centre, meeting with great success and taking 110 prisoners. But unsupported by Sullivan's division, which was still largely engaged at the Chew house, and without assistance from either Smallwood or Armstrong, who had failed to get in the enemy's rear, the success of Greene's division in the obscurity of the fog was likely to prove his ruin. One of his colonels became separated in the fog, and was captured with all his regiment. Wayne's men and others of Sullivan's division that had pressed on were mistaken for the enemy by Greene's division and fired upon. The whole of Sullivan's division, having at last pressed forward by the main road, were suddenly thrown into confusion by some one, it is said, shouting that they were surrounded.

But the real cause of the disaster was that the attack was not a surprise. The British were prepared for it. Armstrong marching by the Ridge Road had not been able to reach the rear of the British left wing, which, commanded by No-Flint Grey, now rallied to the rescue of the centre. At the same time Cornwallis arrived from Philadelphia with a squadron of light horse. They attacked both Sullivan's and Greene's divisions and drove them slowly back. Greene, almost surrounded, withdrew his division with the greatest difficulty. Pulaski's cavalry, which attempted to check the enemy, were forced back and rode into Greene's men, scattering and demoralizing them; but Greene was able to re-form them by the device of persuading

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<sup>2</sup>There has been some difference of opinion as to whether the delay at the Chew house was really a serious hindrance. See W. B. Reed, "Life of Joseph Reed," vol. i, p. 322; Lee, *Memoirs*, vol. i, p. 20.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

a number of them to hold each other's hands until a new line was formed. After five miles of pursuit, the British withdrew and the battle was over.

The battle, it has often been said, came very near being an overwhelming victory for the Americans. But the truth seems to have been, that the old difficulties of defective discipline in the patriot army, lack of proper staff officers and no possibility of quick communication on the field, weakness of the troops from starvation, combined with the fog, made success impossible. So undisciplined were the troops that four or five of them would unite to carry a wounded comrade off the field, dropping and losing their own arms by the way, and perhaps not returning to the battle line. Parties of Germantown boys followed them about to watch the excitement and stare at the grim faces blackened with biting off their powder cartridges in the damp fog.<sup>3</sup>

Washington lost in killed, wounded, and prisoners about a thousand and the British a little over five hundred. Contemporary opinions of the battle varied. Far away from the scene of action, as in Europe, Washington was given the credit of having struck hard and courageously after a series of defeats, and of having raised the reputation of the patriot army among all its friends. Enthusiastic patriot officers like Knox declared that defeat always agreed with Americans. "We were more numerous after the Battle of Brandywine than before and we have demonstration of being more numerous now than before the 4th."

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<sup>3</sup> *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, vol. i, p. 308; vol. ii, p. 112; vol. xvi, p. 107; Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. ii, pp. 521-27; G. W. Greene, "Life of Nathanael Greene," vol. i, pp. 472-481; W. B. Reed, "Life of Joseph Reed," vol. i, pp. 310-23; Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. vi, pp. 93-96, 98-100, 113, 126, 127; Stedman, "American War," vol. i, p. 209; "Life of Pickering," pp. 167-171, 177; Lee, *Memoirs*, vol. i, pp. 27-30; Stillé, "Life of Wayne," pp. 94-98; Johnson, "Life of Greene," vol. i, p. 83; Howe's "Narrative," p. 27; Parliamentary Register, House of Commons, 1770, vol. xi, p. 431.

## THE FABIAN POLICY

In the Congress and among the patriot leaders, many who were Washington's personal friends regarded the Battle of Germantown as a failure and another proof of the General's incapacity. They openly expressed their disgust at what they considered his blunders and Fabian policy of delay. Mifflin was so weary of his methods that he abandoned the duties of his quartermaster-general department and retired to Reading. John Adams declared himself "sick of Fabian systems in all quarters." "Our affairs are Fabianized," wrote James Lovell, "into a very disagreeable posture." The term Fabian seems to have been used to avoid directly naming the commander-in-chief, who was accused of being entirely too much under the influence of Greene. And all this abuse was soon given point and strength by the striking success of Gates in checking the advance of Burgoyne from the north.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> G. W. Greene, "Life of General Greene," vol. i, p. 482; Drake, "Life of General Knox," p. 53.

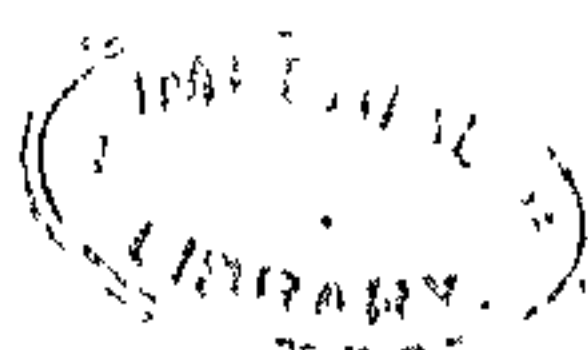
## LVII.

### THE DEFENCE OF RED BANK AND FORT MIFFLIN

WASHINGTON was not yet through with his defeats, for the important question of the river defences of Philadelphia was still unsettled. It was part of the weakness of the British in their invasion of America, that their army had to rely on receiving supplies by sea from England, three thousand miles away. They, of course, obtained a certain amount of food and forage from the neighborhood of any place they occupied. But they never relied on that alone; and, consequently, were never able to penetrate far inland. Philadelphia being about ninety miles from the sea up a river somewhat difficult of navigation, the question arose whether Howe could stay there without starving; and the fact was that he could not remain unless he had absolute control of the navigation of the river from the city to the capes. He was well aware of this; and his brother, the admiral, who had brought the army to the head of the Chesapeake, had waited until he heard of the general's success at Brandywine, when he returned down the Chesapeake and came round into the Delaware.

The Pennsylvania patriots had undertaken early in the war to protect Philadelphia by blocking up the main channel of the river and placing forts on the banks below the city. We have already seen that a similar attempt was made in the Hudson by stretching across the stream between Fort Washington and Fort Lee a great chain with old hulks attached to it and weighted in such a way that they would hang a little below the surface. The intention was that war vessels would either be unable to pass or would be delayed so long in passing that the forts would have time to riddle them with shot. But the







## THE CHEVAUX DE FRISE

plan failed, for the chain either broke or failed to delay the war-ships.<sup>1</sup>

In the Delaware a bedwork of heavy timbers was constructed to rest upon the bottom. Other powerful timbers fastened at right angles to each other were secured on this bed in such a way that their points, shod with iron, extended upwards at an angle of about forty-five degrees and would pierce any vessel that struck them. This contrivance, invented by Franklin and called by him *chevaux de frise*, was eminently successful. The British ships could not pass the spikes, and considerable difficulty was experienced in removing them.

Several ranges of these *chevaux de frise* were placed in the main channel between Fort Mifflin, on the Pennsylvania shore, and Fort Mercer, at Red Bank, on the Jersey shore; and it was an excellent defence, for no ships could work at removing the obstructions without being sunk by the forts. About three miles further down the river, the patriots had sunk some more ranges of *chevaux de frise*, and were now engaged in building a fort for their protection at Billingsport, on the Jersey shore.

The incomplete state of this fort was noticed by the captain of the "Roebuck," the first of the British war-ships to come up the river, and he sent word to General Howe, who immediately sent a detachment of two regiments to take it; and it was to prevent Washington attacking this detachment that Howe had taken a position near him at Germantown. The detachment went down the river on the Pennsylvania side to Chester, crossed over under protection of the "Roebuck" to the Jersey shore, and moved up to the fort, which was immediately set on fire and abandoned by its garrison.

This loss considerably weakened the defences of the city; for the crew of the "Roebuck" now cut out or took up enough of these lower ranges of *chevaux de frise* to enable nearly all the war vessels to approach and mass themselves near Fort

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<sup>1</sup> G. W. Greene, "Life of Nathanael Greene," vol. i, p. 482; Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. vi, pp. 83, 84; Stedman, "American War," vol. i, p. 297.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

Mifflin and Red Bank, which protected the upper ranges of obstructions.<sup>2</sup>

Everything, therefore, depended on holding Fort Mifflin and Red Bank. If they could be held, Howe would be compelled to evacuate Philadelphia and return to New York or maintain a line of communication down the Pennsylvania shore of the Delaware until a point below the *chevaux de frise* was reached, where he could connect with his brother's ships. This last method had been already adopted, and his supplies were brought to him from Chester, which was on the river below the *chevaux de frise*. But such a line was open to attack by the patriot army and might be cut off altogether; and if the patriots could hold the forts for a couple of months, until the ice in the river came to their aid to stop navigation, the British army in Philadelphia would be starved to a surrender, or would have to attempt to escape across New Jersey to New York.

Philadelphia was nothing but a death-trap for the British unless they had complete control of the Delaware to the sea, and Washington seldom wrote such urgent letters or made such strong appeals as he did to save Mifflin and Red Bank. He wrote for reinforcements from Putnam, who was guarding the Hudson Highlands, and even asked for reinforcements from the army of Gates, who was fighting Burgoyne on Lake George. He had made these requests as soon as Howe had crossed the Schuylkill River; and three days after the Battle of Germantown, finding that some of these reinforcements were on their way to join him, he wrote to their commander requesting him to reinforce Red Bank as quickly as possible. "The whole defence of the Delaware," he said, "depends upon it, and consequently all the enemy's hopes of keeping Philadelphia, and finally succeeding."<sup>3</sup>

Colonel Christopher Greene, a relative of General Greene,

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<sup>2</sup> Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. ii, p. 521; Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. vi, pp. 18-27.

<sup>3</sup> Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. vi, pp. 84-86, 101 note, 104, 105, 124, 125 note; Correspondence of Henry Laurens, pp. 60, 61, 62.

## WEAKNESS OF FORT MIFFLIN

was given command of Red Bank; and Colonel Samuel Smith, of Maryland, with two hundred men, had already made a dash to get into Fort Mifflin. He found it garrisoned with only thirty militia and almost destitute of ammunition, but he was soon reinforced with two hundred Virginians. These preparations were made during the two weeks that Howe remained in Germantown after the battle. On the 19th of October he withdrew from Germantown and collected his whole army in Philadelphia. Two days before that Burgoyne, whom he had refused to support, was obliged to surrender his army at Saratoga.

As soon as Howe retired to Philadelphia he protected the city from attack on the north by a line of redoubts stretching from the Delaware to the Schuylkill, along the present lines of Green and Poplar streets. On all other sides, Philadelphia was protected by the Schuylkill and Delaware, which come together below the town.

Fort Mifflin was on Mud Island, just below the mouth of the Schuylkill and close to the Pennsylvania shore. Howe began proceedings by erecting with much difficulty a small battery on the only two dry places on the low marsh near the fort. This marsh or meadow was really another island, called Province Island, made by a back channel or slough which passed round it from the river. It was an awkward place on which to plant a battery. The Americans had cut the banks, which kept out the tide, and the whole island was flooded with water, except the two small dry spots chosen by Howe about five hundred yards from Fort Mifflin. Except on the sides towards these dry spots, Fort Mifflin was well protected.

Howe's engineers had been quick to see that these two dry places were the key to the situation; and when Colonel Smith took command of Fort Mifflin, he also saw this fatal weakness. He erected a two-gun battery, which demolished the first attempt of the British to hold the dry places; but they almost immediately retook them, fortified themselves, increased the number of their guns, and Smith was never again able to drive them out.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

At the same time Howe sent over to New Jersey a body of Hessians, under Count Donop, with grenadiers and light infantry to attack Red Bank, while the fleet was to come up as close to the *chevaux de frise* as possible, and shell both Mifflin and Red Bank. This attack was arranged for the 22d of October; and Count Donop began the day by demanding the surrender of Red Bank, accompanied by the usual threat that if the rebels insisted on fighting no quarter would be given when the fort was taken. Colonel Greene, who had with him about four hundred Rhode Island troops, refused to surrender, and agreed that there should be no quarter on either side.

When the flag to demand the surrender approached, Greene had concealed most of his troops, so that the officer with the flag thought the garrison very small; and Donop accordingly determined to carry the works by assault. It was a bold course; for the fort was strong and the patriot row galleys above the *chevaux de frise* came near enough to help the fort.

Donop charged on the fort in two columns, one commanded by himself and the other by Minigerode. They suffered severely as they ran over the open space; but when they came to the outer works, they found them abandoned, and the inner works were silent. Thinking the fort secured, Minigerode's men waved their hats and rushed on. They were met by a heavy volley; but they pressed on, reached the abatis of fallen trees and were pushing aside the branches, when they received another volley, from which they were with difficulty rallied. They came on again, and another volley throwing them into complete confusion, they ran round to the river front, where the galleys played upon them until they fled back to the woods.

Donop's column got through the abatis of trees, but was stopped by the wall nine feet high, surmountable only by scaling ladders, and unable to endure the deadly fire from it, they joined their comrades in flight.

Greene lost only eight men killed and twenty-nine wounded; but four hundred killed and wounded Hessians lay in heaps round the fort. The survivors hastened back to Philadelphia,

## DEATH OF COUNT DONOP

cursing the British for exposing them to such danger and sending them without ladders to scale the walls.

Count Donop, still alive, was dragged from one of the heaps of the dead and carried on a blanket into the fort. The soldiers who bore him could not refrain from reminding him that he had agreed that no quarter should be given. "I am in your hands," he said, "revenge yourselves." He lived for three days, cared for at the house of a Quaker near by; and when told that his end was near he said, "It is finishing a noble career early; but I die the victim of my ambition and of the avarice of my sovereign."

The attack on Mifflin also failed, for the war-ships could not draw near enough; and the obstructions in the river had altered the channel so that the frigate "Augusta" went aground and was burnt, and the sloop "Merlin" also grounded and was abandoned. These successes raised the question whether it might not be advisable to follow them by a general attack on the British in Philadelphia; but a council of war decided that it would be better to reinforce Mifflin and Red Bank and rely on them alone.<sup>4</sup>

Fort Mifflin was obviously weak on the land side, and the British accordingly began to strengthen the battery they had planted on the dry places on that side, and decided to rely on it to reduce the fort. They had discovered that they could send boats at night through the passage or back channel between Fort Mifflin and this battery. The obstructions in the main channel had deflected the current and caused it to scour out and deepen this back channel. Supplies from the fleet were sent every night in this way to the city. The passage should have been obstructed by the patriots. But even without obstructions the British boats might have been prevented from using it if Commodore Hazlewood, who commanded the patriot row galleys in the upper part of the river, had been willing to come close and use his guns.

Everything, the whole fate of the war and quick independ-

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<sup>4</sup> Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. vi, pp. 143, 144.



## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

ence, now depended on Fort Mifflin; for if it could be held Howe must either surrender or escape back to New York; and if such an event had happened, accompanied by the surrender of Burgoyne at Saratoga, it would be very difficult for the Tory Ministry to survive such a double humiliation. Fort Mifflin's danger was from the land batteries; and why should not these be destroyed by Washington taking his whole force or sending a detachment against them? Howe was no longer at Germantown, where he had at first taken post to prevent such a movement.

If, however, the main American army remained at White Marsh, where it now was, north of Germantown, and a detachment went from it to the relief of Fort Mifflin, Howe might cross the Schuylkill at the Middle Ferry, now Market Street bridge, come in behind the detachment and cut it off. A more feasible plan was for Washington to leave a small force at White Marsh to cover the hospitals and stores at Reading and Bethlehem, take his main army to the Middle Ferry of the Schuylkill, so as to prevent Howe crossing, and then send a detachment to destroy the British land batteries that were assailing Fort Mifflin.

The plan seemed to promise success. Wayne was enthusiastic over it and was to command the detachment against the land batteries. But although Washington seems to have favored the enterprise, his council of war voted it down. It was no doubt full of dangers. Howe driven to desperation might become aggressive. He might cross the Schuylkill above the Middle Ferry and force the patriot army into an awkward situation, in the angle of the rivers. There was even something to be said in favor of letting Howe keep Philadelphia and become innocuous for another nine months. The execution of the plan was accordingly postponed until reinforcements should arrive from Gates in the North; this postponing was continued until all chance of saving Fort Mifflin was gone; and there was another outburst of indignation against councils of war, which Wayne said were "the surest way to do nothing."<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Lee, *Memoirs*, vol. i, pp. 35-39; Stillé, "Life of Wayne," pp. 103-107, 112.



## ATTACK ON FORT MIFFLIN

All that Washington could attempt was to try to mislead the British and prevent their massing troops against the forts by contriving that intelligence should fall into their hands of a great patriot movement for the capture of New York and Staten Island.<sup>a</sup> But Howe's army went steadily on with their work. It was now a question between Fort Mifflin and the battery on the Pennsylvania shore, and for a time nature was on the side of the fort. There came three or four days of very high tides which swept over the dry places at the battery, drowned some of the British soldiers, and stopped the working of all their guns but one. Advantage should have been taken of this by the galleys; but their commodore would do very little to assist the fort. He was a long range commodore, and disliked close quarters; for he said a single shell from the fleet might sink one of his galleys; or being a mere state officer, he may have been unwilling to assist the continental troops.

When the tides subsided, the British set to work with renewed vigor. They remounted their guns and poured such a continuous fire into the fort for several days that two of its guns were silenced, the northwest block-house and laboratory blown up and the garrison forced to shelter themselves in the new works. On the 11th of November, Colonel Smith, wounded and exhausted, was relieved, and Major Thayer, of Rhode Island, took his place.

On the 15th of November the British planned a combined attack. Several of the fleet came up close to the *chevaux de frise* so as to attack the fort in front and also so as to reply to a small new battery on the Jersey shore erected below the *chevaux de frise* to annoy the fleet. Two vessels, the "Vigilant" and a hulk worked their way into the passage between Fort Mifflin and Province Island, so as to second the work of the battery that had already done so much damage. The "Vigilant" and the hulk could pour a hot fire on the fort and from their masts shoot down into it. A fatal mistake had been

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<sup>a</sup> Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. vi, p. 170 note.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

made in not watching this passage and learning that the deflected current had deepened it. Two old vessels sunk in it would probably have choked it up, and General Reed thought that if this had been done, both Mifflin and Red Bank would have been saved, Howe would have been compelled to evacuate Philadelphia, with heavy loss, and the war would have been terminated.<sup>7</sup>

The combined fire of all these ships and batteries was the heaviest cannonading that occurred in America during the war. It was estimated that over a thousand shot were fired every twenty minutes. Fort Mifflin was doomed. But Thayer kept up his resistance all day with the utmost heroism. By noon the furious fire from all directions had beaten down his redoubts almost level with the mud, and his men were sheltering themselves as best they could in the remaining buildings and ruins. The way was still open for them to escape across the river above the *chevaux de frise*, and early in the evening Thayer sent away all but forty, together with a large part of his supplies. The forty he kept with him till midnight, and before crossing to Red Bank they set fire to the remains of the fort.

The British fleet could now send up supplies by day as well as by night through the passage behind what had been Fort Mifflin. On the 18th Cornwallis took a force from Philadelphia to Chester and crossed to New Jersey to attack Red Bank. He was joined by 2000 reinforcements from New York, giving him an army of at least 5000 men. A patriot force of about 3000, under General Greene, crossed the Delaware above Philadelphia, as if to help the fort, and there were expectations that it might be saved. But the expedition of Greene seems to have been made as a matter of policy, for appearance sake, and to satisfy the clamors of the New Jersey patriots, who said they were left unprotected. There was no hope of saving Red Bank, which was evacuated and abandoned before Cornwallis reached it.

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<sup>7</sup> W. B. Reed, "Life of Joseph Reed," vol. i, pp. 338, 341.

## HOWE AT WHITE MARSH

While Howe was weakened by the absence of Cornwallis in New Jersey, some of the more ardent of Washington's officers were for attacking the line of fortifications on the north of Philadelphia and breaking into the town. It would have been a popular enterprise very inspiring to the patriot party, but it was abandoned as too hazardous. The British fleet soon began to take up the *chevaux de frise*, and the patriot galleys, under Commodore Hazlewood, either escaped up the river or were set on fire by their crews and abandoned.<sup>8</sup>

Howe was now secure in Philadelphia. But before settling down comfortably for the winter he made a fruitless expedition, which, like White Plains and Warren Tavern, aroused the greatest ridicule and indignation against him among the loyalists and his critics in England. Washington had moved his army to a position at White Marsh, some fifteen miles north of Philadelphia, and thither on the night of the 4th of December marched Howe in personal command of what Washington described as the whole British army and one of his officers estimated at 15,000 men. For several days Howe marched and counter-marched round Washington's position, accomplishing nothing; and no small number of his troops were picked off in skirmishing with the militia and Morgan's riflemen.

When Washington found that the British would not attack him, he was inclined to attack them. But his officers dissuaded him from moving from his good position to assail at disadvantage such an overwhelmingly superior enemy. No doubt the

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<sup>8</sup> Gordon gives a very careful description of these events, which he investigated almost immediately after their occurrence. See K. W. Greene, "Life of Nathanael Greene," vol. i, p. 484, and note to p. 500, where he gives a good list of the sources of the original evidence. Also, W. B. Reed, "Life of Joseph Reed," vol. i, pp. 335-341; Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. vi, pp. 131, 137 note, 143-146, 148, 157, 159, 168, 169, 176, 177, 187 note, 188, 190-206, 217, 218 note, 220, 224, 227 note, 228, 373, 374; Correspondence of Henry Laurens, pp. 63-68; "Life of Pickering," pp. 174, 178-182; Stedman, "American War," vol. i, p. 301.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

safer course was to wait to be attacked when he would be able to inflict heavy loss on the British and compel them to purchase a victory as dearly as possible. Military critics insisted that Howe, having almost double the number of Washington, could have inflicted a severe defeat and scattered the American army. He could have gone round in the rear of Washington, it was said, threatening to cut him off from his baggage and provisions, and this would have compelled Washington to fight at a disadvantage or retreat to save his baggage.<sup>9</sup>

It was certainly a rather strange expedition, and Howe's explanation was merely that he had gone out in that way to reconnoitre Washington's position and found it too strong to be attacked.<sup>10</sup> After wandering about in the neighborhood for a few days, he returned with his army to Philadelphia.

Soon after this parade, Washington took his army to Mutton's Ford, on the Schuylkill. One-half of them, Greene reported, were without breeches, shoes or stockings, and some thousands without blankets and winter already begun. The ground was hard frozen, and again we hear that the army could have been tracked from White Marsh to the ford by the blood from their naked feet.

They were prevented from crossing by a large British foraging party of about 4000 men on the other side of the river under Cornwallis, who was ravaging the farms along the Gulf Road, now familiar to suburban Philadelphians as a picturesque and pleasant drive. There was no battle, however, for the Americans moved three or four miles higher up the Schuylkill

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<sup>9</sup> Stedman, "American War," vol. i, pp. 305, 306; Gordon, "American Revolution," vol. iii, p. 11; Greene, "Life of Nathanael Greene," p. 534; W. B. Reed, "Life of Joseph Reed," vol. i, pp. 350, 351; Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. vi, pp. 238, 240; Boudinot's Journal, p. 50; Lee, Memoirs, vol. i, pp. 40-45, 120 note; J. J. Boudinot, "Life of Boudinot," vol. i, p. 68.

<sup>10</sup> Howe, "Narrative," pp. 29, 30, and his letter to the Ministry, Parliamentary Register, House of Commons, 1779, vol. xi, p. 354.

## VALLEY FORGE

to Swedes Ford, and the next evening crossed the river and marched to the winter quarters that had been selected.<sup>11</sup>

There had been much discussion among the officers as to where the army should winter. Many were in favor of a line from Reading to Lancaster. Greene and Cadwalader favored Wilmington. But Washington finally decided on a place much nearer Philadelphia; and on the 19th of December the army marched along the western bank of the Schuylkill to Valley Forge, where on a good-sized hill, very steep and almost unapproachable on its westerly or upper side, but gently sloping for a long distance to the eastward down the river, they began to establish themselves for the winter. They built huts of logs and spread the regiments in intrenched camps far down the slope along the river. On the hill itself, near the top, an intrenchment was dug, consisting of a ditch with the earth thrown up in front of it, and to this apparently, if attacked, they intended to retire for a last stand.<sup>12</sup>

It was an heroic but a very wretched, starved and ragged army which for the sake of their rights as men built those huts and dug those not very formidable trenches along the Schuylkill in the frost and snow of December. On the 23d of December, shortly after their arrival, Washington reported 2898 men unfit for duty by reason of their being barefoot and otherwise naked.<sup>13</sup>

Howe settled himself and his army most comfortably and securely in Philadelphia, in entire indifference as to what had happened to poor Burgoyne in the North. Galloway, the loyalist, was made superintendent of police; and with the reinforce-

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<sup>11</sup> Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. vi, pp. 243-245 and note; Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iii, pp. 10-12; "Life of Pickering," p. 102.

<sup>12</sup> Greene, "Life of Nathanael Greene," p. 535; W. B. Reed, "Life of Joseph Reed," vol. i, pp. 348, 352; Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. vi, p. 233; Stedman, "American War," vol. i, p. 307; Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iii, pp. 10-12.

<sup>13</sup> Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. vi, p. 207.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

ments of 2500 received from New York, Howe's army now numbered about 20,000.<sup>14</sup>

People who had favored the patriot cause were still continually dropping out of it; and apparently Howe hoped that his post-holding method would keep up this disintegrating process until the patriot party and army fell to pieces. There was, indeed, much reason for this expectation. The patriot defence had completely broken down. Every event, Brandywine, Warren Tavern, the Schuylkill crossing, Germantown, Red Bank and Mifflin, had ended in failure; and in the opinion of many nothing but the forbearance of Howe had kept Washington's army from extinction. The success of Gates in bringing Burgoyne to a surrender in the North animated many patriots, but others could see no good result from it if everything failed in the South.<sup>15</sup>

In order to take advantage of this state of affairs, and prevent if possible a patriot alliance with France, General Howe, after he had established himself in Philadelphia, attempted another of his curious suggestions of compromise. He talked the subject over with Robert Morris's partner, Thomas Willing, who had undertaken to occupy a neutral position and advise both sides to withdraw from such a destructive war. Through Willing a certain John Brown, who had been in the employ of the firm of Morris and Willing, was sent out among the patriots to report the conversation Willing had had with Howe. The General was ready for some agreement or reconciliation; if independence were rescinded the colonies would be put back in their old condition before 1764 and given more privileges than they had asked; no standing army should be kept in America; their paper currency should be established; and they need not lay down their arms until all this had been finally settled.

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<sup>14</sup> G. W. Greene, "Life of Nathaniel Greene," vol. i, pp. 510, 532.

<sup>15</sup> Graydon, *Memoirs*, edition of 1846, pp. 283, 284, and appendix; *Writings of Washington*, Ford edition, vol. vi, pp. 115-117 note; "Life of E. Gerry," pp. 268-272; W. B. Reed, "Life of Joseph Reed," vol. i, p. 358.



## COMPROMISE REJECTED

This was the Whig program again; liberal treatment, generous privileges, and voluntary submission. But the patriots were not to be caught. They had learned that if they gave the least heed to such suggestions, it would be reported in France and deter the French Court from assisting them. Since the surrender of Burgoyne they were expecting very active aid from France, if not an alliance; but it would never be given unless they stood out for a complete separation from England. John Brown was accordingly arrested, confined and his mission ended.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> *Pennsylvania Colonial Records*, vol. xi, pp. 345, 346; *Pennsylvania Archives*, vol. vi, pp. 25, 30, 36, 45.

## LVIII.

### BURGOYNE SWEEPS DOWN FROM CANADA

IN the spring of 1777, General Schuyler had taken offence because the Congress, without consulting him, had dismissed one of his surgeons; and he wrote them letters of sharp reproof, revealing that somewhat arrogant trait which caused his unpopularity among the New Englanders. The Congress by resolution reminded him that his letters exceeded the limits of toleration and that for the future they must be more suited to the dignity of the cause and his own character as an officer. Some months later he explained the expressions in his letters, and this is supposed to have been preparatory to his appointment in May to the command of the whole northern department, Albany, Ticonderoga and Fort Stanwix.

The New Englanders in the Congress were bitterly opposed to his appointment; but they were outvoted; and the reason given by the majority, or New York party, for the appointment was that in spite of his unfortunate manners, Schuyler was the only man who could keep the New York patriots united against the enemy. He was skilful also, it seems, in negotiating with the Six Nations of Indians. But he never took the field in active warfare and remained merely the general manager of the northern department, with Gates as his subordinate at the front. The two had now before them the task of resisting the great expedition from Canada which, during the summer of 1777, was to come southward by Lake Champlain and the Hudson Valley to meet Howe going north from New York.<sup>1</sup>

The command of this important expedition had been given

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<sup>1</sup> Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. ii, pp. 426, 474, 475; Journals of Congress, Ford edition, vol. vii, p. 180.

## BURGOYNE'S EXPERIENCE

by the Ministry to General John Burgoyne, whose principal military experience had been as a cavalry officer. He was now fifty-six years old, seven years older than Howe and seventeen years older than Clinton.<sup>2</sup> When a young man of about thirty he had eloped with Lady Charlotte Stanley, and, neither of them having much means, he was obliged to leave the British army and live for seven years in France to economize. On his return he again entered the army and as a captain served under Marlborough in 1758 in the attack on Cherbourg.

Light cavalry were just being introduced in the British army and Burgoyne won the favor of the King by organizing this arm of the service and bringing it up to a high degree of efficiency, somewhat as Howe had distinguished himself by organizing the light infantry. But Burgoyne had very slight experience in the field compared with Howe. He was present at the attack on Belle Isle in 1761 as a volunteer without taking any very active or conspicuous part. The next year he commanded a brigade in the war England waged to assist Portugal against France and Spain; and he carried a position of the enemy at Valentia by a brilliant charge. This campaign closed his active service in Europe and was sufficient to make him a man of distinction in London. He had already become a member of Parliament, and was a moderate Tory, who occasionally voted against Lord North and the Ministry, but was with them in their measures against America.

Favored by the King we now find him rising rapidly in life and acquiring wealth from those appointments and sinecures which were in the power of the Crown to bestow. He spoke well in Parliament. He had a tone of chivalry and integrity, and certainly was not sordid in his pursuit of wealth. His letters, whether of business or pleasure, were models of the delicate compliment and exalted sentiment which were part of the proprieties of the time. He wrote *vers de société*, and

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<sup>2</sup>I give Burgoyne's age in accordance with his biographer, Fonblanque, who says he was born in 1722. His birth has sometimes been given as in 1730.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

those epilogues and prologues which were then considered such an important part of a play. Some of his best were written for the private theatrical entertainments of noblemen. As a writer of plays he achieved a very great success. His "Maid of the Oaks," first produced at Drury Lane in 1774, enjoyed a great popularity for many years and remained a stock piece for the English theatres far down into the next century.

Macaulay's summary of him is perfect, "a man of wit, fashion and honor, an agreeable dramatic writer, and an officer whose courage was never questioned and whose skill was at that time highly esteemed." The American opinion of him was expressed by Pickering when he said that he was "supposed to have ability, but to be sanguine and precipitate and puffed up with vanity, which failings may lead him into traps that may undo him." He led in London a delightful life of pleasure and duty. He was prominent and admired for his talents and conversation; his acquaintance was eagerly sought by the gay and fashionable; and he was connected with important events and measures in a way to see and understand without being responsible for results. He had had no desire to serve in America when the war broke out and if it had been possible, would have refused.<sup>3</sup>

In ability one might at first be inclined to class him with those British officers who in modern times win strings of medals in wars against East Indians or Zulus, but utterly fail against a white race like the Boers of South Africa until rescued by overwhelming numbers and the unlimited expenditure of wealth. But such a reflection hardly does justice to Burgoyne, whose men and officers seem to have believed in him, and whose failure was due to extraordinary circumstances and the shortcomings of others rather than to himself. But success is so much a test of military ability, that it would be difficult to build up again among Englishmen the reputation of

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<sup>3</sup> See generally Fonblanque, "Life of Burgoyne;" "Life of Pickering," p. 150.

## BURGOYNE'S ARMY

the man who was the first British officer to surrender an army to rebels and militiamen.

It has usually been supposed that Carleton would have been a better officer for such a difficult undertaking. But he seems to have been out of favor and never was given command in the rebellious colonies, until, the Revolution being over, he was made commander-in-chief and put in charge of the evacuation of New York. His failure to take Ticonderoga in the autumn of 1776 and his kindness to American prisoners have been given as reasons for the Ministry's refusal to advance him; and it has also been said that having been a witness against Germain in his trial for cowardice at Minden and having refused to appoint upon his staff a certain favorite of Germain, that distinguished minister entertained for him so bitter a dislike that he would have had him recalled from Canada if the King had not interfered for his protection.<sup>4</sup>

Burgoyne, however, seems to have enjoyed a fair amount of ministerial favor. They gave him about 7000 regular troops, nearly half of whom were German Brunswickers, under their own officers Baron Riedesel and General Specht. Besides these he had a couple of hundred Canadians and loyalists and about four hundred Indians, making in all about eight thousand. An excellent train of brass field artillery was furnished him; his equipment was in every respect the best of the times; and his subordinate officers, Frazer, Riedesel, Power and Hamilton, were of much more than usual efficiency.<sup>5</sup>

The plan of the campaign contemplated two expeditions. There was the main one under Burgoyne himself, which was to proceed through Lake Champlain and Lake George, and a

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<sup>4</sup> Fonblanque, "Life of Burgoyne," pp. 225-228; Jones, "History of New York in the Revolution," vol. i, pp. 199, 336; Walpole, "Journal of the Reign of George III," vol. ii, p. 135.

<sup>5</sup> Burgoyne, "State of the Expedition from Canada," second London edition No. 12; St. Clair Papers, vol. i, p. 60; Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. ii, pp. 476, 678; Jones, "New York in the Revolution," vol. i, pp. 198, 677; Fonblanque, "Life of Burgoyne," pp. 240, 488.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

smaller expedition which was to go up the St. Lawrence and along the shore of Lake Ontario to Oswego, take the patriot stronghold Fort Stanwix, and then come down the Mohawk River so as to attack the flank or rear of any patriot force advancing to intercept Burgoyne. St. Leger was given command of this expedition against Fort Stanwix with a force of about 800 regulars, loyalists, Canadians and Indians.

Burgoyne set out up Lake Champlain on the 17th of June, and encamped at Crown Point, where he met the Indians for a grand conference. Carleton from motives of humanity was opposed to employing the Indians, which may have been another reason for his unpopularity with the Ministry. But Burgoyne had express instructions to use them, and he gave them a great war feast and addressed them in a set speech in which he explained that they must not kill prisoners, especially old men, women and children, that they must not scalp the wounded, or indeed any one unless they had slain him in fair fight. This was intended to quiet public feeling and bring the savages within what are supposed to be the amenities of civilized warfare.

There was no fort or army to oppose Burgoyne until he reached old Ticonderoga. He had an easy and even delightful march to that place, passing the enormous flocks of wild pigeons then on their way to Canada, and on which his troops at times subsisted. On the 2nd of July as he approached Ticonderoga he issued a grandiloquent proclamation announcing the terrors of war for rebels, the royal clemency for the repentant, and his Majesty's intention to restore the rights of the British Constitution and deliver America from the tyranny of revolutionary committees, "arbitrary imprisonment, confiscation and torture unprecedented in the inquisition of the Romish Church." It was such a labored and pompous effort, that the Americans easily ridiculed it and soon clever parodies of it appeared in print.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Niles, "Principles and Acts of the Revolution," edition 1876, pp. 178-180, 197; Anburey, "Travels," vol. i, pp. 275, 300.



## FALL OF TICONDEROGA

But Burgoyne, no doubt, thought it in entire keeping with his victorious progress, for at Ticonderoga he met with a great and unexpected success. The patriot general, St. Clair, who was in command had some time before made up his mind that Ticonderoga was indefensible. It is true there was the fort itself, and Mount Independence also fortified across the narrow strip of water, and there was a floating bridge with obstructions to navigation not yet quite completed. But all these, it seems, were useless because Sugar Hill, which had not been fortified, looked down upon and commanded them all. If the enemy occupied Sugar Hill they could shoot down into the works of both Ticonderoga and Mount Independence. All this St. Clair had tested by planting a cannon on Sugar Hill a few months before and trying the experiment.

So the boasted defences of Ticonderoga, the supposed rampart against invasion from Canada, were no defences at all. St. Clair, with only 2500 continental troops and 900 militia, had too few to occupy and defend Sugar Hill as well as the fort and Mount Independence. He therefore abandoned his post after resisting for a time the first approach of the British. He did this on the advice of a council of war, among his officers. It was best, they thought, to save their troops rather than surrender them prisoners or sacrifice them. They preferred to escape with them and march them farther south, where they would still be between the enemy and the rest of the country, and where militia and recruits could rally to them and make a new stand.

This sudden revelation of the weakness of Ticonderoga caused great surprise in both America and England. People in England wondered why Carleton had not taken it in the previous year; and in America there was great indignation against St. Clair for his sudden evacuation of the stronghold of the North and abandonment of the immense supplies of cannon and ammunition which had been stored there. His reasons and excuses were not accepted and he was charged with inefficiency and cowardice.

He was finally tried by a court-martial which acquitted

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

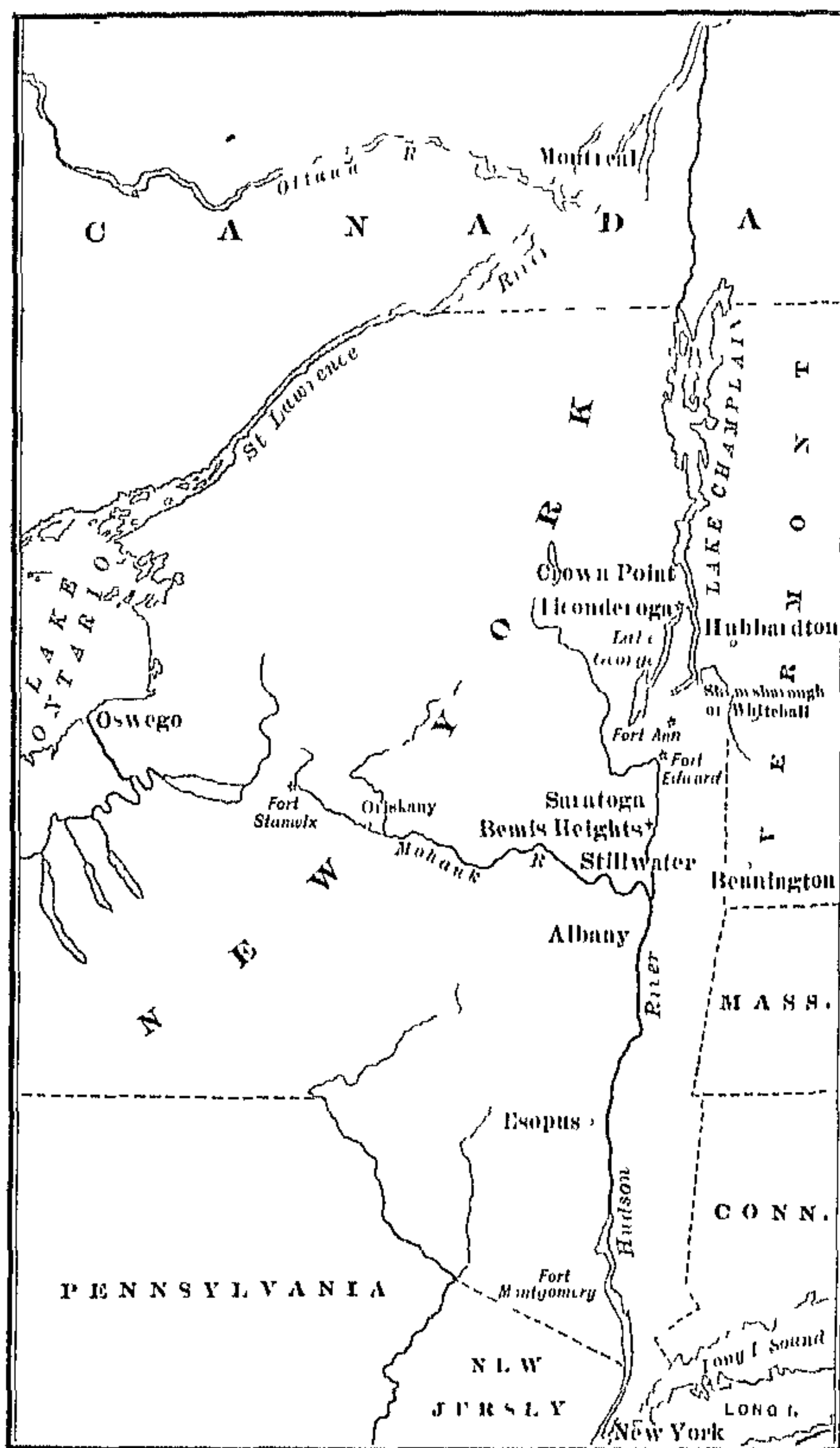
him of all blame; and there seems every reason to believe that it was better to abandon Ticonderoga and save his men than to sacrifice them in a hopeless defence. Three years afterwards General Lincoln was placed in a similar position in Charleston, and took the opposite course. He stayed in the town, attempted to defend it and lost his men as well as the town.

General Schuyler was court-martialed for neglect of duty in being absent from Ticonderoga when St. Clair evacuated it. This was the culmination of ill feeling against him. The court at his request investigated his whole conduct of the northern campaign, and unanimously acquitted him with the highest honor.<sup>7</sup>

The error of allowing Ticonderoga to be commanded by a hill which the enemy could occupy was one, Wilkinson said, that had been made at Fort Pitt by the engineers of that time. Ticonderoga had been neglected by Congress and by everybody. Schuyler was quarrelling with the Congress; incompetent or careless subordinates were in the North, and there was a general lack of spirit and energy. Schuyler was mistaken as to the supposed strength of the place, and his confident letters misled Washington and the patriot leaders. The condition of affairs was no doubt made worse by an opinion, supposed to have been encouraged by British emissaries, that after all there was not much danger of an attack from Canada by way of Lake Champlain. The movements from that direction, it was said, were mere feints to conceal the real purpose, which was to send Burgoyne's army round by sea to join Howe at New York. This was the more readily believed because it seemed to be a wiser plan. The two armies of Burgoyne and Howe united at New York could proceed up the Hudson to Lake Champlain and control that whole strategic line more effectually and with less risk than by Burgoyne coming down from the North to meet Howe going up from the South. All their efforts would be concentrated. So long as they remained united they could not

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<sup>7</sup> Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. vii, p. 303 note.



MAP OF BURGOYNE'S CAMPAIGN



## ST. CLAIR'S RETREAT

be defeated and they would be able to attack Washington or make any other expedition.<sup>8</sup>

St. Clair's retreat from Ticonderoga was intended to be an orderly one. The evacuation was decided upon by the council at 3 in the afternoon of the 5th of July, and was to take place that night. They had to be prompt, for the British, who seemed to know the ground perfectly, were already clearing a road and getting their artillery on Sugar Hill, and the next day they would both command and surround the American position. St. Clair's troops prepared eight days' provisions to carry with them and marched out of Ticonderoga at 2 o'clock in the morning, in silence and good order. But an hour later when General Fermoy abandoned Mount Independence, he set fire to his house, which, lighting up the whole mountain, enabled the British to discover the retreat of the Americans.

Alarmed by knowing that they were discovered the retreat of St. Clair's men came very near being a rout; and it was with great difficulty that he restored order among them. He marched some thirty miles during the day and stopped at Castleton while his rearguard under Colonel Warner remained several miles behind him at Hubbardton, or Huberton as it was called. The next morning a pursuing body of British under General Frazer attacked Warner, who was much weakened by the desertion of one of his regiments under Colonel Hale. With only about seven hundred men Warner made a good fight and withstood the British so resolutely and with such good marksmanship, that they gave way. They formed again and, relying on their bayonets, put the inferior number of Americans to rout, which was increased by the arrival of a body of Brunswickers under Baron Riedesel.

This was the Battle of Hubbardton, which, though nothing

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<sup>8</sup> St. Clair Papers, vol. i, pp. 46-54, 61-81; Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. v, pp. 336 note, 442 note, 459, 461, 467, 469, 472, 475, 477, 485, 488, 490, 501, 502, 503, 517, 520-522; vol. vi, pp. 1, 2, 5, 13, 18, 28, 45; Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. ii, pp. 470-492; Wilkinson, "Memoirs," vol. i, pp. 167, 169, 181-185, 191; Amburey, "Travels," vol. i, pp. 319-340.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

but a rearguard action, was, nevertheless, counted by Burgoyne as one of his signal victories. St. Clair gave no support to his rearguard, principally, it is said, because the two militia regiments that were nearest would not obey his orders and the rest were too far away. His army was in a deplorably disorganized state, and two days afterwards while continuing his retreat he found two regiments of New England militia so disorderly, and so addicted to plundering, that he dismissed them from the army.

Meantime, while General Frazer was pursuing St. Clair by land, Burgoyne was pursuing by water. Cutting through the boom and obstructions which had been set in the narrow passage at Ticonderoga, his gun-boats and some of his larger vessels passed through loaded with troops and proceeded up Lake George sweeping everything before them, and forcing a precipitate retreat of the Americans, who blew up or burnt their boats, forts and mills and retreated up Wood Creek to Fort Anne, where General Schuyler, who was now directing the retreat, ordered the scattered army to collect.

General Burgoyne sent Colonel Hill with his regiment to watch this American rendezvous at Fort Anne; and on the 8th of July the Americans attacked him, drove him to a hill where they besieged him for two hours and might have signally defeated him, but for the arrival of some Indians who gave the warwhoop, which was answered with three cheers by the British. The Americans unwisely, perhaps, believed themselves outnumbered, abandoned their attack, set fire to Fort Anne and retreated to General Schuyler at Fort Edward.

Burgoyne was certainly having a magnificent success. He had forced the great northern barrier, and penetrated far to the south of it, driving his enemy before him. He had destroyed or captured 128 pieces of patriot artillery as well as vast supplies of flour and beef. St. Clair had joined Schuyler at Fort Edward, where they found that the remains of their beaten forces amounted to only about 4400 men.

Burgoyne had now the choice of two routes down to Albany; and it has been said that if he had returned to Ticonderoga and



## ROUTES TO FORT EDWARD

put his army on his vessels, he could have sailed to Fort Edward and driven the Americans from it in four days and that in a week more he would have reached Albany. But instead of taking what seemed to be the rapid passage by water, he began to construct a military road by land through the woods to Fort Edward. It was a half wilderness, rough country of creeks, marshes and woodland trails, and the Americans had felled trees across these trails. Besides clearing the roads and trails of these obstructions, Burgoyne had to build forty new bridges besides repairing old ones; and one of his new bridges was a causeway two miles long across a swamp.

His enemies afterwards fixed upon this as the great mistake of his campaign which caused all his subsequent disasters. He exhausted his men and horses, they said, and consumed three weeks of precious time to reach Fort Edward which had no fortifications and could have been reached by water in a few days. He had fallen, it was said, under the influence of a certain Colonel Skene, a rich land-owner and loyalist of that region, the proprietor of Skenesborough, now Whitehall, near the southern end of Lake Champlain. Skene was a thrifty Scotchman, who had served during the French War in the Lake Champlain region. He became so enamored of it that he had obtained a grant of 25,000 acres from the government, and began to establish a great estate and domain like that of the Schuyler family further south. He had volunteered in Burgoyne's expedition, and now, they said, recommended to him this military road with its forty new bridges which would render his great estate more valuable by many thousand pounds.<sup>o</sup>

But in his examination before Parliament, Burgoyne seems to have disproved this whole story. He could not have gone to Fort Edward by water any faster than he went by the new road and forty bridges. He had not vessels enough to use the

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<sup>o</sup> Jones, "New York in the Revolution," vol. i, pp. 201-203, 002; Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. ii, pp. 487, 480; Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. v, p. 480; Stedman, "American War," vol. i, p. 324; Amburey, "Travels," vol. i, p. 345.

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water route; those he had were all in use carrying his provisions by the water route; and in conveying the provisions to Fort Edward they spent all the time that the troops spent in cutting the road to that place.<sup>10</sup>

The Americans evacuated Fort Edward on the 30th of July; and Burgoyne was still sweeping everything before him. A large part of the patriot army had deserted and gone to their homes. Those that remained were so disorganized, dispirited, and jealous of one another, that they could scarcely retreat in an orderly manner with the enemy twenty miles behind them.

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<sup>10</sup> Burgoyne, "State of the Expedition from Canada," pp. 17, 53, 54, 98, 126; Fonblanque, "Life of Burgoyne," pp. 264, 267, 268, 269. Lamb, in his *Journal of the American War*, p. 142, says that no Indians arrived at the engagement at Fort Ann. Their arrival was merely imitated by a British officer who gave the warwhoop.

## LIX.

### HOWE'S DEFENCE OF HIS ABANDONMENT OF BURGOYNE

BURGOYNE having taken Ticonderoga, the northern gateway, and pressed on down to Fort Edward, had no fortified places to oppose his march southward to the Hudson Highlands at West Point, which was the southern military gateway of the Hudson Valley. All that was needed to complete his success was that Howe should now be coming up the Hudson, taking West Point as Ticonderoga had been taken, and moving on to Albany, where there seemed to be nothing to prevent Burgoyne effecting a junction with him.

But where was Howe? On the 23d of July when Burgoyne, having brought up his tents and baggage, was moving down on Fort Edward, Howe, as already related, sailed out of New York harbor with his 18,000 men and went south to Chesapeake Bay, abandoning Burgoyne and the plan of conquest which he had himself approved and described as the prime object of that year's campaign.

If Burgoyne had known the real situation, had known that instead of coming up to join him, Howe had deliberately incapacitated himself from effecting a junction by taking nearly his whole army by sea to Chesapeake Bay, there would have been only one course for Burgoyne, and in spite of his instructions he would probably have followed it. He would have beat an instant retreat back to Ticonderoga or possibly back to Canada, while the chance remained.<sup>1</sup>

Both he and his men were relying implicitly upon ample support from Howe. The whole make-up of their expedition,

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<sup>1</sup> His instructions are printed in "State of the Expedition from Canada," Appendix 4.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

its numbers, equipment and route were based upon Howe's coming up to meet them in full force. The 8000 troops of the expedition were not numerous enough to reach Albany, maintain themselves there and at the same time defend a long line of communication of over two hundred miles back to Canada. They were already so scattered by leaving a garrison at Ticonderoga and detailing men to guard supply trains and defend the line of communication, that there were scarcely 3000 left for an advance force.

While it was true that the patriots demoralized by the sudden evacuation of Ticonderoga had retreated in disorder, yet they soon would be returning; militia would be summoned from all over New England in sufficient numbers to overwhelm 3000 regulars or cut to pieces their long line of communication and starve them to death. Nothing could prevent this save Howe coming up the Hudson in force, especially if he had first sent a detachment to threaten or attack the coast of New England and keep as many as possible of the militia at home. This was the original plan agreed upon between Howe and the Ministry.

Howe was by no means ignorant of the present situation of the northern expedition. On the 17th of July, six days before he sailed from New York for Chesapeake Bay, he wrote a letter to Burgoyne saying that he had received certain letters from him and had heard of his victory at Ticonderoga; and then coolly informs him that he is not going to his assistance, but intends to invade Pennsylvania, leaving Sir Henry Clinton in New York to "act as circumstances may direct." He says nothing about any diversion upon the New England coast to stop the movement of the militia and as a matter of fact he made none. Clinton, whom he left in New York, had barely enough men to defend the town and could not make the slightest movement to assist Burgoyne unless some 1700 reinforcements should arrive from Europe.\*

Howe has frequently been defended on the ground that no

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\* See Howe's letter in full in "State of the Expedition from Canada," Appendix No. 10.

## PEREMPTORY ORDERS

peremptory written instructions were sent to him to go up the Hudson in force to join Burgoyne; and he was left entirely to his own discretion. The story has often been told that peremptory instructions were drafted, but not ready for signature, when Germain was on the point of leaving town for his country seat. He left word to send them to him to be signed; but it was neglected; he forgot all about them, and they were never sent. This curious incident was first made public in 1875, when the *Life of William, Earl of Shelburne*, was published. It was so like some turn in a play or novel, and seemed to portray Germain as such a worthless and amateurish statesman, that writers have gladly accepted it as an easy and short explanation of the whole subject.<sup>8</sup>

It is difficult, however, to see how this omission to send peremptory orders could alter Howe's responsibility. If the omission left him free to use his discretion then he used his discretion very badly. As commander-in-chief in America, 3000 miles away, he was bound to act for the best under all circumstances, without peremptory instructions. He was given discretionary power because he would be a better judge of military movements than the Ministry. He had never been put under peremptory instructions in military matters. He had been given full discretion. He knew the object to be attained; he had been supplied with all the information possessed by the Ministry; given a general outline of their plans; and left to act as he thought best. This was the common and necessary

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<sup>8</sup> Jones, "New York in the Revolution," vol. i, p. 696. In one of his plays, "The Devil's Disciple," and a note appended to it, Mr. Bernard Shaw has developed in a very entertaining way this explanation of Howe's conduct.

The omission to send peremptory orders to Howe was perhaps not as accidental as has been supposed. General Robertson testified before the committee of inquiry that he had urged upon Germain the importance of not crippling Howe's movements by positive instructions, and that Germain had acted on this advice, and had left Howe to act on his own discretion.—*Parliamentary Register, House of Commons, 1779*, vol. xiii, pp. 305, 323.



## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

method for commanders-in-chief when at such a distance from the home government. Under this rule Howe had evacuated Boston, fought the Battle of Long Island, occupied New York and remained inactive for the following winter.

He was well aware of this; and in his defence before Parliament was careful not to rely on the absence of peremptory instructions. He mentions the absence of such instructions, but disclaims any reliance upon that point, and defends the movement he made to Philadelphia on purely military grounds as the best that could be done under the circumstances.

Early in the year he had informed Germain that not having received the reinforcements he expected, he could not carry out the original plan of sending a strong force to New England, and another strong one to Pennsylvania to prevent the rebels massing at Lake Champlain, while he himself went up the Hudson to effect a junction with the expedition from Canada. He could only, he said, make the expedition to Pennsylvania.<sup>1</sup> But although Germain received this information before Burgoyne's expedition started, and it might be said that, therefore, there was no obligation on the commander in America to go up the Hudson, Howe very astutely refused to place his defence on any such shaky ground as Germain's implied approval of the Philadelphia expedition. He merely called attention to that possibly implied approval for the sake of any effect it might have on certain minds, and again fell back on the purely military merit of his conduct.

"And here, Sir, although I might shelter myself from this violent charge by referring to the complete approbation as well as acquiescence of the Secretary of State, and might answer every objection by the short observation that the reasons for adopting this expedition (to Philadelphia) are adjudged by his Lordship to be solid and decisive; yet am I content to waive that justification and to stand entirely upon the merits and policy of the measure itself." (Howe's Narrative, p. 18.)

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<sup>1</sup> Parliamentary Register, House of Commons, 1770, vol. xi, pp. 201, 302, 389, 404; *American Archives*, 5th series, vol. iii, pp. 926, 1318.



## HOWE'S STRANGE CONDUCT

As a matter of fact Germain did not approve of the Philadelphia expedition to the exclusion of a junction with Burgoyne; for Germain, as we have seen, finally wrote to Howe, saying that he hoped the Philadelphia expedition would be made in such a way as not to preclude assistance being sent to Burgoyne. Howe received this letter on the 16th of August, when he had reached the Chesapeake. But he made no attempt whatever to rescue Burgoyne or detach troops to his assistance.<sup>5</sup>

The Ministry, or indeed any one, would naturally have confidence that Howe, being precluded by lack of reinforcements from making all the three original expeditions, one into New England, one up the Hudson, and one to Philadelphia, would, without any special instructions, use what force he had in making the one which was of most importance and would most surely protect Burgoyne. No one ever thought that he would abandon both the New England and the Hudson movements and concentrate himself on the Philadelphia expedition; and everyone in both America and England, and many of his own officers were astonished when he took this course.

Sir Henry Clinton, in his manuscript notes to Stedman's "American War," says, "I owe it to truth to say there was not, I believe, a man in the army, except Lord Cornwallis and General Grant, who did not reprobate the move to the southward and see the necessity of a coöperation with General Burgoyne." The patriots believed that such a junction would seal their fate. "Nothing under heaven can save us," wrote Trumbull, "but the enemy's going to the southward."<sup>6</sup>

The first news of Howe's total change of plan reached England in August; and prominent men of both political parties saw at once that Burgoyne was doomed. Walpole describes the Ministry as greatly disturbed; and they are said to have

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<sup>5</sup> Galloway, "A Reply to the Observations of General Howe," p. 45.

<sup>6</sup> "Life of Peter Van Schaack," pp. 173-178; Clinton's MS. notes to Stedman's "American War," p. 289; De Lancey's note to Jones's "New York in the Revolution," vol. i, p. 697; Galloway, "Reply to Observations of Sir W. Howe;" "Remarks on General Burgoyne's State of the Expedition from Canada," London, 1780.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

hurriedly sent orders to Burgoyne not to advance beyond Albany until he could hear from and concert with Howe.<sup>7</sup>

"Lord George Germain owned to Lord Hertford, that General Howe has defeated all his views by going to Maryland instead of waiting to join Burgoyne, and that Clinton had not force enough at New York to send him any relief." (Fonblanque, "Life of Burgoyne," p. 343.)

Washington was keeping Howe's great army amused in Pennsylvania and at the same time detaching enough men to the North to take complete advantage of Burgoyne's weak and isolated position. Howe, it was said, could have fought Washington on the Hudson more effectively than one hundred miles away at Brandywine.

In the desperation of his defence, Howe made the extraordinary argument, that even if he had gone up the Hudson in force, and succeeded in saving Burgoyne, that success "could not have been accomplished in time to have taken possession of Philadelphia, that campaign." In other words, Burgoyne must be sacrificed for the sake of occupying Philadelphia. And in another argument, Howe says that if he had gone in full force to the assistance of Burgoyne, he would have been accused of attempting to steal that officer's laurels.

The subject is one which has always aroused a great variety of opinion. It has sometimes been said that all the facts and circumstances are consistent with entire honesty of purpose on the part of Howe. He may have merely made a great blunder, a gigantic mistake of judgment. But the mistake was so obvious and absurd, "so unaccountable," as Washington called it,<sup>8</sup> that, when people considered Howe's high ability and intelligence in all other matters, many of them very naturally refused to believe that it could be a mere mistake. They believed that beneath it lay some ulterior purpose of Whig politics, an unwillingness in the Whig general to allow Tory Burgoyne and

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<sup>7</sup> Walpole, "Journal of Reign of George III," vol. ii, p. 132.

<sup>8</sup> "Howe's in a manner abandoning Burgoyne is so unaccountable a matter that till I am fully assured of it I cannot help casting my eyes continually behind me."—Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. v, p. 520.

## A GROUNDLESS ARGUMENT

the Tory Ministry to make a great stroke and settle the war in a way that was not the way of Howe and the Whig party; and this feeling was strengthened when it was seen that all the rest of Howe's conduct during the war bore this same suspicious cast.

In one part of his defence as regards Burgoyne, there is an argument which at first sight seems to have some weight. He says that he assumed that as the Ministry had sent out Burgoyne they must have given him a sufficiently large force to enable him to penetrate to Albany and hold it without any more assistance than drawing off Washington to Pennsylvania. In fact, Howe affected to believe that Burgoyne could conquer both New York and New Jersey, and in his letter to Burgoyne he assumes that that officer will be able to conquer Connecticut as well as New York; for he says, "My wishes are, that the enemy be driven out of this province before any operation takes place in Connecticut."

This sounds somewhat plausible if we assume that Howe was totally ignorant of Burgoyne's numbers and instructions. But like the rest of his defence, it will not bear a moment's close investigation. He knew all about Burgoyne's numbers and instructions as well as his condition and progress. He admitted that he had received a copy of the instructions which Carleton was directed to give Burgoyne and in those instructions the brigades and regiments which Burgoyne was to take with him are particularly described and their numbers given as 7173.<sup>o</sup>

If Howe knew anything at all, he knew that it was utterly impossible for 7173 regulars to penetrate as far as Albany, hold that town and protect a line of communication of over two hundred miles back to Canada unless he supported them by coming up the Hudson in strong force. In other parts of his defence Howe continually complains of the dangers of the long distances in America, that it was impossible to penetrate any distance inland even with his own large force of 30,000, and he was always calling for reinforcements. That he should affect

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<sup>o</sup> "State of the Expedition from Canada," Appendix No. 4, p. xv.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

to believe that those 7173 regulars under Burgoyne could alone and unaided by his army conquer the whole province of New York and possibly New Jersey, with a side expedition into Connecticut, was a piece of cool effrontery which would surely have been exposed if the investigation into his conduct had not been cut short by the sudden adjournment of Parliament.

Those same instructions in their second paragraph commanded Carleton to direct Burgoyne "to proceed with all possible expedition to join General Howe and to put himself under his command." After describing the force to be given Burgoyne, the instructions direct Carleton "to give him orders to pass Lake Champlain; and from thence, by the most vigorous exertion of the force under his command, to proceed with all expedition to Albany and put himself under the command of Sir William Howe." Until the juncture with Howe was effected, Burgoyne and St. Leger are to act as "exigencies may require; but in so doing they must never lose sight of their intended junctures with Sir William Howe as their principal objects."

All this Howe had read in the copy of the instructions which he admitted he had received; and having that knowledge in his mind it is difficult to see why he should need anything more peremptory or anything which more clearly put upon him the duty of assisting Burgoyne by going up the Hudson to meet him.

But he had not done so; he was far away down in the Chesapeake, and Burgoyne, under binding instructions to press southward to meet him, was moving on in pathetic ignorance of what fate had in store. He had sent word back to Carleton for reinforcements to garrison Ticonderoga, and protect his communications so that he could use his whole force in proceeding southward. But Carleton was confined by his instructions to the defence of Canada and refused to act outside of his own department.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. v, p. 510 note; Burgoyne, "State of the Expedition from Canada," p. 30.

## HOWE NOT INFLUENCED BY LEE

In modern times an attempt has been made to give a short and easy explanation of Howe's abandonment of Burgoyne by supposing that he was influenced by that extraordinary character, General Charles Lee, then a prisoner in his hands. Lee, it seems, drew up a plan of campaign recommending a British movement to the southward and a general occupation of Chesapeake Bay, as the surest way to end the American rebellion. This plan was dated the 29th of March, 1777, and was found among the papers of Howe's private secretary many years after the Revolution.

But the mere fact of the plan being found among the secretary's papers is no proof that Howe was influenced by it and is not even proof that he ever saw it. Moreover, he had formed the plan of going to Philadelphia early in the winter before Christmas, and many months before the date of the plan.

We also find, when we read the plan, that it does not recommend the move to Philadelphia which Howe made. In fact, it pointedly disapproves of taking Philadelphia. "In my opinion," Lee says in it, "the taking possession of Philadelphia will not have any decisive consequences." The plan then goes on to recommend the occupation of the well-known strategic position of the Chesapeake, seizing Alexandria in Virginia and Annapolis in Maryland, because "if the province of Maryland or the greater portion of it is reduced or submits, and the people of Virginia are prevented or intimidated from marching aid to the Pennsylvania army, the whole machine is dissolved, and a period put to the war."<sup>11</sup>

Howe was notoriously indifferent to advice or suggestion. There is no evidence whatever that he was in any way influenced by the Lee plan; and he certainly did not follow it. If it came to his attention he probably tossed it aside and his secretary may have preserved it as an interesting curiosity, coming from a treacherous man. Howe worked out his own

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<sup>11</sup> "The Treason of Charles Lee," by George H. Moore, 1860, New York Historical Society Collections, 1874, vol. iv, p. 406; Fiske, "American Revolution," illustrated edition, vol. i, p. 309.



## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

plans and was not moved by the suggestions of a scared prisoner who offered a plan of no military merit.

As it has been difficult to find good military reasons for Howe's conduct, and it has been deemed inadvisable to disclose the political reasons given by Galloway and the loyalists, and the evidence that was before the committee of inquiry, the historians have strained hard to invent other explanations, and the boldest one of all has been adopted by Bancroft, who assigns General Carleton as the cause of all the trouble. Carleton, he says, originated the expedition from Canada. He was ambitious to come down from Canada into the rebellious colonies and take the supreme command. Howe refused to assist the expedition from Canada because it might be commanded by Carleton, who, when he arrived in New York, would outrank Howe and supersede him. The discovery or suspicion of this design on the part of Carleton is supposed to have led Howe to announce to Germain that he would not assist the northern movement down Lake Champlain.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Bancroft, "History of the United States," edition of 1886, vol. v, p. 147. Still another explanation, originating in Harry Lee's *Memoirs*, has been given in Dr. E. E. Hale's "One Hundred Years Ago," and repeated in Trevelyan's "American Revolution," vol. i, p. 338, that Howe was so scared by his experience at Bunker Hill that he became cautious and could never follow any plan except that of occupying towns. Lee, *Memoirs*, vol. ii, p. 308.



## LX.

### BURGOYNE'S DEFEAT AT FORT STANWIX AND AT BENNINGTON

WHILE Burgoyne had been fighting his way to Fort Edward, St. Leger and his force of 700 British and 1000 Indians had worked their way round on the westward by Lake Ontario, and on the 3rd of August they invested Fort Stanwix, which was in command of Colonel Gansevoort, but in a very weak state of defence. General Herkimer with 700 militia collected along the Mohawk, went to its relief, and reached the mouth of the Oriskany, where it flows into the Mohawk. The next day he fell into an ambuscade of Indians, which St. Leger had set for him, was mortally wounded and his command defeated. But some of his men made such an obstinate resistance in this action, which is now known as the Battle of the Oriskany, that the loyalists and Indians were thrown into confusion and began killing one another.

Some of the garrison of Fort Stanwix sallied out and routed two of the Indian and loyalist encampments, capturing their provisions, tomahawks, spears and deer skins. The Indians were greatly disgusted, for they had lost seventy of their number and among them several of their best chiefs and warriors. But in spite of this loss among the British, the Herkimer relief party had been in effect defeated and St. Leger tried for several days to persuade the garrison to surrender.

Meantime, two of the garrison, skillful woodsmen, slipped out of the fort in the night and crawled on their bellies for half a mile, until they were clear of the lines of the besieging Indians and British, when, with nothing to eat but blackberries, they made a rapid journey to General Schuyler at Stillwater. General Arnold, who had recently joined the northern army, at once volunteered to lead a rescue party to

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Fort Stanwix. But his numbers were so few compared with St. Leger's that he had little hope of success, except by some stratagem that would deprive St. Leger of the assistance of the Indians.

A curious half-witted Dutchman, Hon Yost, had a brother who was about to be hanged for offensive loyalism. Arnold agreed to pardon the loyalist if the half-witted brother, who was regarded with superstitious awe by the Indians, would go among them and describe the enormous number of the American forces that were about to attack them. Hon Yost carried out his mission most successfully, and told how he had barely escaped from the Americans, as the bullet holes through his coat testified. Soon after an Indian arrived and confirmed the story, and then a third arrived with a tale that Burgoyne's army was cut to pieces and that Arnold was advancing by forced marches with 3000 men. The whole encampment of savages at once prepared for flight. St. Leger plied them with drink; but they would not stay. He had promised them an easy victory, they said, and instead of that their best men had been killed.

Having lost his Indian allies there was nothing for St. Leger to do but to retreat with them; and they amused themselves by hurrying his retreat. Every few miles one of their number would come running from the rear crying, "They are coming, they are coming." Whereupon the white men would take to their heels; some of them throwing away their packs; their commanders, St. Leger and Sir John Johnson, stumbling and falling over logs while the Indians enjoyed the joke. At intervals St. Leger and Johnson quarrelled, each blaming their misfortune on the other until they drew their swords and would have fought if the Indian chiefs had not interceded.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Arnold, "Life of General Arnold," pp. 149-162; Burgoyne, "State of the Expedition from Canada," Appendix No. 13; Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. ii, pp. 529-535; Jones, "New York in the Revolution," vol. i, pp. 215-218, 700; *Gentleman's Magazine*, March, 1778.

## NEW ENGLAND AROUSED

Possibly Carleton knew what he was about when he disapproved of employing the Indians. The St. Leger expedition had been planned, in one respect, on a good theory. The point where the Mohawk flowed into the Hudson was a natural rallying place for any patriot force which Burgoyne would drive southward from the lakes. By coming down the Mohawk, St. Leger would attack the flank of this patriot force which would be assailed by Burgoyne in front and by Howe in the rear. But St. Leger's force was too small to be isolated when all its success depended on the exact timing of its arrival near Albany to support both Burgoyne and Howe. The distances were too great and the circumstances too uncertain for such delicate movements; and now, on the 22d of August, St. Leger was wiped out of the campaign and Fort Stanwix saved for the patriots.

Early in August the astounding and unwelcome intelligence of St. Clair's evacuation of Ticonderoga and Burgoyne's advance to within sixty miles of Albany, had reached the patriot party all over the country, and the Congress and the leaders had begun to prepare for some decided action. Earlier in the summer and up to August, the uncertain movements of Howe at New York had kept the New Englanders in great anxiety lest he should make a sudden descent on Boston or some other part of their coast. This uneasiness helps to explain why the New England regiments so readily deserted St. Clair and Schuyler, and why Burgoyne had met with so little resistance. But in August it became known that Howe had taken his army far to the southward, and that New England was safe from any attack. It was, therefore, quite evident that if the militia of New Hampshire and Vermont, being close to Burgoyne's flank and rear, should assail him at those points, he would be taken at a great disadvantage, his lines of communication might be cut and his army isolated.

Washington accordingly sent General Lincoln to Massachusetts to collect the New England militia and mass them on Burgoyne's flank, which would in any event stop his further

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progress. Lincoln was a native of New England, and not so much disliked in that region as Schuyler. He at once found nearly a thousand men ready to march, and this number was rapidly increased.

Most of these fresh troops were from New Hampshire, under the command and influence of General Stark, who since his service at the Battle of Bunker Hill had considered himself slighted and neglected by the Congress. He also had no liking for Schuyler, and would not take command in the patriot cause unless he had the privilege of conducting an independent New Hampshire expedition.

Schuyler was calling on both Lincoln and Stark to join him in a front attack upon Burgoyne, which they both refused to do because they thought that the flank and rear attack was the better. The Congress at the same time attempted to settle the difficulty and bring Stark and Lincoln to terms, and most of August passed away in this wrangle.

Fortunately Burgoyne was quiet in the neighborhood of Fort Edward all this time waiting for supplies from Canada. They were so long coming, because of an insufficient number of draft horses, that he grew very impatient, and when he heard of a patriot supply of corn and cattle only a few miles to the eastward at Bennington, Vermont, he resolved to seize them.

General Riedesel, writing after the war, describes himself as strongly protesting against this Bennington expedition; but Burgoyne denied that any protests were made, except such as expressed a wish on Riedesel's part for the command of the expedition. After it had failed, it was, of course, easy to see why it should never have started. But Burgoyne seems to have sent it out on sufficient information received from various sources that the supplies were weakly guarded and that there were numerous loyalists in the neighborhood, who would be only too glad of a chance to rise and assert themselves.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Riedesel, *Memoirs*, p. 140; Burgoyne, "State of the Expedition from Canada," pp. 99, 100, 134-139.

## BATTLE OF BENNINGTON

The weak part of the expedition was, that in two respects Burgoyne's information was at fault. The willingness of the loyalists to rise, as well as their number, was greatly exaggerated; and while it was true that the patriot supplies at Bennington were weakly guarded, yet Stark, unknown to Burgoyne, was approaching that place with his newly raised militia. He had just decided to set aside his animosities and grievances and join Schuyler.

Relying on the loyalists and not knowing of Stark's approach, Burgoyne sent Colonel Baum with only 500 German regulars and about 100 Indians to seize the stores at Bennington. The criticism may, perhaps, be made that on general principles this force was too small to be risked so far away in an isolated position. This was, no doubt, a point where Burgoyne made a mistake, the mistake constantly made by British generals during the war.

When Stark first heard of Baum's movement towards Bennington, he sent two hundred men to check its advance which was composed of Indians. But as news came that the Indians were followed by a large force of regulars, Stark collected his whole body of militia, and marching on the morning of the 14th of August, soon met the men he had sent out retreating with the British in close pursuit.

Baum, seeing the Americans in such unexpected force, sent back to Burgoyne for reinforcements, and the Americans drew back to a stronger position. On consultation with his officers, Stark decided to send two detachments into the enemy's rear and attack with the rest in front. It rained all day, which prevented a battle and also prevented the reinforcement from arriving from Burgoyne.

The next day about three o'clock in the afternoon, Stark carried out his plan of attacking simultaneously in front and rear. The Indians escaped in the beginning of the action before the Americans could close on them. But Baum's Germans, attacked on all sides by Stark's militia, fought obstinately in the intrenchments they had made. The British and German



## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

officers were amazed at the way the militiamen, without bayonets, rushed upon the trenches. It was a fine exhibition of the New England method of fighting without military discipline; and the militia had been encouraged by the promise of free plunder among the baggage of the enemy.

Baum was completely routed, and just as his defeat was accomplished, his reinforcements arrived under Colonel Breyman, who was in turn attacked by Stark's victorious militia, supported by a fresh regiment that had just come up under Warner. The fighting continued till sunset, when Breyman and Baum retreated under cover of the darkness with the heavy loss of some 400 killed, wounded and prisoners, besides their artillery, ammunition, and wagons.<sup>a</sup>

This battle, although a mere side engagement, has always been regarded as one of the great victories of the war. Of course, now that Burgoyne was pressing on in ignorance of Howe's abandonment of him, his expedition was doomed with or without Bennington. But Bennington brought the end sooner; and was a terrible blow to Burgoyne. Independent of the moral effect he could not afford to lose 400 men.

It was a typical American victory, over an isolated British detachment; the sort of victory that when finally occurring in a series, brought the war to a close. The essential principle in the whole military situation lay in this question of isolated detachments; and we have already had several instances of them. Howe, in 1776, had placed a detachment at Trenton. Washington promptly cut it off and a week or so afterwards, finding another isolated detachment at Princeton, defeated that also, the two engagements being generally regarded as saving the American cause. The Ministry planning Burgoyne's expedition had sent round by Fort Stanwix a small detachment,

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<sup>a</sup> "State of the Expedition from Canada," pp. 134-143, Appendix Nos. 8 and 9. The Americans reported the British loss at over 700.—Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. ii, p. 538; Stone, "Burgoyne's Campaign;" Wilkinson, "Memoirs," vol. i, p. 208.



## DANGER OF DETACHMENT

which met with disaster. Burgoyne had sent Baum's small force on an expedition to Bennington with the fate we have just seen. Breyman, sent to reinforce Baum, arrived too late and constituted another isolated detachment which was defeated; and in fact Burgoyne's whole expedition if not supported by Howe was in itself an isolated detachment which was sure to be cut off.

Washington saw very clearly the working of this principle. He was much pleased when he heard that Burgoyne was acting by detachment.<sup>4</sup> In fact, the capacity and merit of the generals on both sides can be gaged by the clearness with which they saw this principle, and the skill with which they could make use of detachment without rushing into ruin. Washington, perhaps, violated the principle when, after the Battle of Brandywine, he left Wayne in an isolated position at Paoli; and we shall soon see him running great risk under peculiar circumstances in detaching Lafayette to Barren Hill. But he never made in this respect what could be called a capital and fatal mistake. Howe made the mistake only once at Trenton. Clinton never made the mistake and was peculiarly clever at sending out successful detachments which accomplished their purpose with little or no risk. Cornwallis, on the other hand, detached so much and in such a continuous series, that we shall soon see him bringing irretrievable disaster on himself as well as on the British cause. Instead of taking the view of Washington and of Clinton that detachment was of the utmost delicacy and danger, Cornwallis seemed to believe that it was good in itself, and he carried it out with fanatical blindness.

It is, of course, evident that the Americans being in possession of the country with more or less of a patriot population in every locality, could detach with far more safety than the British who were invaders at particular points surrounded by hostile inhabitants. When Clinton's successful detachments are examined, it is found that they depended in almost

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<sup>4</sup> Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. v, pp. 504, 510.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

every case on the British navy, which having complete control of the waters of the coast, could land a detachment unexpectedly at a sea-port where it could accomplish its work quickly without penetrating far inland. So far as the British were concerned small isolated expeditions were safe only on the water.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Besides Bungey's "State of the Expedition" and Gordon's "American War," see generally, Cobbett, "Parliamentary History," vol. 20, pp. 740, 786, 788, 798; Parliamentary Register, House of Commons, 1777, vol. xi, pp. 478, 479, vol. xiii, pp. 92, 93, 164, 174, 176, 253, 266, 267; Jones, "New York in the Revolution," vol. i, pp. 676, 682, 685.

## LXI.

### THE TWO BATTLES OF SARATOGA

BURGOYNE now lost the assistance of a large part of his Indians; and their defection seems to have been closely connected with one of those curious events which often unexpectedly arouse public sympathy and feeling.

A British officer, Captain Jones of the artillery, was said to have fallen in love with an American girl, Miss McCrea, who lived near Fort Edward. Anxious to bring his bride to a place of security, as her father was a loyalist, he promised two Indians a barrel of rum if they would bring her safely to the British camp. It was a strange and rather improbable thing for a man of any sense to do. But the story goes on to tell that on her way, dressed, it was said, to meet her promised husband, the two Indians disputed as to which of them should take her to Jones, and one of them to settle the question killed her with his tomahawk.

When Burgoyne complained in a letter to Gates of the treatment of some of the prisoners taken by Stark at Bennington, Gates retorted by complaining of the atrocities of the British Indians who, he said, had murdered women and children and were so inhuman that they could not even be restrained from murdering the sweetheart of a British officer.

Burgoyne replied that the murder of Miss McCrea was the only instance of Indian atrocity. But in that he seems to have been mistaken. He was apparently doing his best to restrain the Indians and not succeeding. They had for a time obeyed his prohibitions; but quickly relapsed into their old habits. He at first intended to put to death the murderer of Miss McCrea, but becoming convinced that such a punishment would drive them to greater violence he pardoned the murderer upon the Indians all agreeing to reform. They, however, almost

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

immediately afterwards told him that they could not submit to his prohibitions and were going home, a threat which 500 of them carried out in a few days, taking with them all the plunder that they had collected.

Burgoyne never dreamed that his pardon of the murderer would make such a public commotion as followed. It seems to have been the one thing needed to inflame the patriot imagination, eager for food that would nourish its hatred of the British invader. The McCrea story was told and retold, dwelt upon in all its harrowing and tender details, and embellished with eloquence and sentiment until it, no doubt, served an excellent purpose in uniting the patriots and arousing them to greater efforts in support of the army of Gates. In its effects, it was somewhat like the hanging of Nathan Hale, and has filled a space in the annals of the Revolution out of all proportion to its seeming importance.

It is probable that there was no truth in that part of the story that described the young woman as having Indians sent for her by her lover. She had remained at Fort Edward after the Americans abandoned it, was captured by the Indians, and while taking her to the British camp in a dispute for her possession she was killed.

Having failed to capture the supplies at Bennington, and having lost heavily in horses and wagons as well as in men, Burgoyne was compelled to wait nearly a month, from the 16th of August until the 13th of September, while provisions were slowly brought down from Canada. In that time the patriots, animated by their victories at Stanwix and Bennington, and relieved of all fear of Howe attacking New England or going up the Hudson, were rapidly collecting an army that would completely overwhelm the expedition from Canada.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Chastellux, vol. i, p. 417; Wilkinson, "Memoirs," vol. i, pp. 230, 231; Amburey's "Travels," vol. i, pp. 369, 372-375; Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. ii, p. 545; "State of the Expedition," &c., pp. 66, 67, 129-131; Fonblanque, "Life of Burgoyne," pp. 257, 258; Lamb, "American War," pp. 145, 157.

## CROSSING THE HUDSON

A new problem was now presented to Burgoyne. He was on the eastern side of the Hudson River, and Albany, the object of his expedition, fifty miles away, was on the western side. It seemed necessary to cross to the western side at Saratoga near where he was; for the farther down the river he went, the more difficult it would be to cross; and the patriot army, which was collecting on the right bank, might stop his crossing. If he crossed at Saratoga and expected to keep up his line of communication back to Canada, he must leave a considerable force to protect that line from the crossing back to the Lakes. This method, although apparently recommended by General Riedesel, was not approved by Burgoyne; for he had left over a thousand men to guard Ticonderoga and other points in the rear, he had lost some 400 at Bennington, and if he detached any more to defend communications he would not have enough to fight his way to Albany. He resolved, therefore, to leave his communications as they were, collect as many supplies as possible and, carrying them with him across the Hudson, force his way to a junction with Howe at Albany.

For this decision he was, of course, criticised in England. Why had he not, before the Battle of Bennington, made a rapid dash over the fifty miles between him and Albany; and even after that battle, why had he not made a rapid dash instead of that long waiting of a month to collect provisions which gave the enemy a chance to reorganize? <sup>2</sup>

Fifty miles is certainly not a great distance. But Burgoyne explained that there was only one road leading along the river and the enemy could easily have rendered it impassable to vehicles and even to horses, by felling trees across it where it ran between a precipice and the river, and by destroying the bridges over ravines and gullies. The troops would be without the artillery so much dreaded by the enemy and they would be obliged to carry everything on their backs. They could not have taken, in this way, more than four days'

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<sup>2</sup> Riedesel, *Memoirs*, p. 141; "State of Expedition from Canada," p. 143; Anburey, "Travels," vol. i, pp. 378-385, 417.



## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

provisions. The Mohawk might have been flooded or its crossing resisted. They would soon have been isolated in a half wilderness country, whose population dared not or would not feed them. They would have become the victims of famine without a blow from the enemy; and there would have been a surrender at Albany instead of at Saratoga.

If the expedition to Bennington had succeeded and the large supply of horses, wagons and cattle, as well as provisions had been obtained, Burgoyne admitted that he might possibly have hazarded a sudden dash to Albany. What he might have done or should not have done, can, of course, be endlessly debated. But when we consider that Howe was not coming to his support, it made little difference what he did. Every movement and every decision would sooner or later have the same end.<sup>3</sup>

So he crossed at Saratoga to the west side of the Hudson on the 13th of September with the artillery, baggage and provisions for thirty days transported by the usual means of horses, oxen and wagons. But what was his force? Out of the 7000 troops with which he started, detachments, garrisons for the line of communication and casualties had left him only 4646 men. Of these, so many had to be detailed for baggage and ammunition guards, care of the sick and wounded, and similar services, that, according to the testimony of the adjutant general, there was left only eleven hundred men who could go into action.<sup>4</sup>

At Stillwater, 12 miles below where he crossed, the patriots had been collecting an army which had now been moved up to a ridge called Bemis or Bohmus Heights and strongly intrenched there in the American manner. Gates had superseded Schuyler and taken command on the 19th of August. His activity and zeal in reorganizing inspired confidence, and the New England militia soon began to march to his assistance. According to English accounts, violence and handcuffs were

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<sup>3</sup> "State of the Expedition," &c., pp. 147-157.

<sup>4</sup> *Id.*, pp. 102, 103; Appendix No. 14.



## NUMBER OF PATRIOT ARMY

used throughout New England, to compel the patriot militia to serve, and the prisons were filled with delinquents or loyalists who refused service. Something over 3000 of the militia-men appear to have been obtained mingled with continentals sent by the efforts of Washington and the Congress, so that the army of Gates, which was only 5500 on his taking command, grew within about a month to 7000.<sup>5</sup>

Among the troops sent up by Washington were Daniel Morgan's famous riflemen, intended to be a counterpoise to Burgoyne's Indians. Washington expected great things from these hunters and marksmen. "I shall be very much mistaken," he says, "if their presence does not go far towards producing a general desertion among the savages." Most of the savages had, however, already deserted and the handful that were left could not be persuaded to come within sound of the Morgan rifles.<sup>6</sup>

The first attack on Burgoyne had already happened. It had been made by General Lincoln, who, without it is said consulting Gates, sent a force under Colonel Brown and Colonel Johnson to carry out the original plan of striking Burgoyne's flank and rear. Brown and Johnson were so successful, that they surprised and took all the posts and stores in Burgoyne's rear from the landing at the north end of Lake George up to Ticonderoga. They captured nearly 300 of the enemy and released 1000 American prisoners.

After crossing the Hudson on the 13th of September, Burgoyne moved southwards towards the American army encamped on Bemis Heights. The Americans had the advantage of about 7000 men strongly intrenched while the British were in the open with only 4600 troops. The British, however, were better

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<sup>5</sup> "Remarks on General Burgoyne's State of the Expedition from Canada," p. 28, London, 1780; Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. vi, pp. 4 note, 44 note. The British of course exaggerated the American numbers, and Riedesel gives Gates an army of from 14,000 to 20,000. (Memoirs, p. 143.)

<sup>6</sup> Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. vi, pp. 33, 34.

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disciplined and had an advantage in their excellent train of brass field artillery. This artillery was expected to offset the American habit of intrenching, and render their works untenable, without the necessity of an assault, which would involve such loss of life as had occurred at Bunker Hill. Gates and his officers knew of this artillery and feared its effect on their breastworks. At Arnold's suggestion, as is supposed, they decided to fight in front of their fortifications in the woods, where the artillery would be almost useless, but where the American riflemen would be at their best.

The American right rested on the Hudson River, was strongly fortified and covered the road to Albany which Gates was determined to protect at every hazard; and he took personal command of this part of the line. The centre was protected by a heavy thicket and ravine; so that the English in feeling their way avoided the right and centre and concentrated their movement on the left which they might hope to turn.

The left was commanded by Arnold. Gates adopted the plan of putting forward Morgan's corps of riflemen and light infantry, the élite of his army as they were called, together with a party under Arnold to reconnoitre the enemy; and on the 18th of September Morgan and Arnold skirmished with the British as they felt their way southward through the heavily wooded country. On the evening of that day the British encamped within two miles of the American position. Arnold's division with Morgan's corps was in advance of the American left with their right resting on the impenetrable thicket which covered the American centre. It was an excellent position for defending the left. The ground between the two armies was heavily wooded with an opening or clearing about midway called Freeman's Farm.

On the morning of the 19th of September, the British advanced in three divisions, Riedesel on the left, Burgoyne in the centre and Frazer on the right. Arnold advised attacking them at once, and Gates directed him to send Colonel Morgan and the light infantry and support them. This Arnold did and the battle began about noon. The Americans

## NUMBER OF THE BRITISH

tried, at first, to turn the British right and then the left, and failing in both these movements settled down at about 3 o'clock in the afternoon to a direct attack on the front. At first only Burgoyne's and Frazer's divisions were engaged; and, according to Riedesel, they were beaten and about to retreat, when his men saved and rallied them by attacking the right flank of the enemy.

Arnold kept reinforcing Morgan until there were about 2500 or 3000 Americans in the fighting line. How many Burgoyne had is difficult to determine. According to the testimony afterwards given before Parliament he had with him on this attempt to reach Albany 4600; but so many were guarding the camp, boats, hospital and ammunition wagons that his men in action against the 3000 Americans were only 1100. This seems very few and possibly the adjutant who testified before Parliament may have meant that there were only 1100 British. On this supposition if we add the proportion of Germans, and possibly some Canadians and Indians, it might give Burgoyne about 2000 on the fighting line. The evidence of his numbers has, however, usually been ignored on our side and the general statement made that he was superior in numbers or had from 3500 to 4000 in action. This gives more credit to our army; but at this late day the patriot cause hardly needs the assistance of such devices.

The battle lasted until far into the dusk of the evening and was fought on the American side by Arnold's division under his own personal command. Some of the regiments, it is said, remained in action until almost midnight. Burgoyne was outnumbered; but it was a most stubbornly contested fight, and the German officers said the hottest and most continuous firing they had ever experienced.

The battle has been variously called the First Battle of Saratoga, or the Battle of Bemis Heights, and sometimes the First Battle of Stillwater. The English called it the Battle of Freeman's Farm. It furnishes additional testimony, if any were needed, that Burgoyne was a good officer in the field, and that his subordinates and men, British and German, were

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

among the finest troops in the world. They were superbly handled in the latest European manner, division supporting division in correct formation, accurately timed. But they could accomplish nothing in the face of the superior numbers and methods of the Americans. They were being cut to pieces all the time; and much to their surprise, their great reliance, the bayonet, was as easily evaded by militia in the woods of New York, as it had been evaded by Indians at Braddock's defeat in the woods of Pennsylvania. The American half-Indian tactics of climbing into the tops of trees, shooting from behind them, individual fighting without set rule or formation, the picking off of officers and the deadly aim of the riflemen, were better suited to the situation at this Battle of Bemis Heights than European science and discipline.

Burgoyne's description of the methods of Morgan's men is interesting:

"The enemy had with their army great numbers of marksmen, armed with rifle-barrel pieces; these, during an engagement, hovered upon the flanks in small detachments, and were very expert in securing themselves and in shifting their ground. In this action many placed themselves in high trees in the rear of their own line, and there was seldom a minute's interval of smoke, in any part of our line, without officers being taken off by a single shot." ("State of the Expedition," p. 163.)

Burgoyne himself had a narrow escape. As he was receiving a dispatch from an aide, a rifleman, observing that the aide had laced ornaments on his saddle, inferred that he must be the general, shot him through the arm, and reported among the patriots that Burgoyne had been killed.

When darkness came, the Americans drew back to their intrenchments, and the British officers claimed a victory because, as it seemed to them, their last bayonet charge had been effective in causing this retreat and leaving them masters of the field. Riedesel claimed for himself the honor of saving the day and causing the final retreat. It is true, no doubt, that the British and Germans were entitled to the credit of a victory for having withstood for a whole afternoon more than their own number of militia and riflemen. But their



## EFFECT OF THE BATTLE

valor had been of no real advantage. Killed, wounded and prisoners they had lost over 500 men, which was nearly half their fighting force. Several regiments were nearly wiped out of existence. Burgoyne thought that the American loss had been the greater; but it was only about half that of the British; and, moreover, the Americans could stand a loss, while Burgoyne could not afford even a victory in which he lost nearly half his fighting men.<sup>7</sup>

The credit for any American advantage during the day was popularly ascribed to Arnold, who had commanded the left with his accustomed vigor and his orders were ably carried out by Morgan. But Gordon, who investigated the battle soon after its occurrence, and Wilkinson, who was Gates's aide, said that Arnold did not head his division but remained in camp; and this opinion has been followed by Bancroft in his *History of the United States* and Graham in his *Life of Morgan*.

The next day the British took some comfort in intrenching themselves on the field of battle at Freeman's Farm, from which they believed they had driven their enemy. But the two armies remained inactive and rather apprehensive of each other. The British were very naturally alarmed at the check they had received; and the American ammunition had run so low that they had to send hurriedly to Albany to strip the lead off the windows of the old Dutch houses. More of Burgoyne's Indian allies deserted him; and some of the Oneidas joined the American army and began to bring in British scalps.

From the 20th of September, the day after the battle, until the 7th of October, the two armies remained opposite each other intrenching and strengthening themselves, constantly skirmishing, but coming to no general engagement. Gates was

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<sup>7</sup> I. N. Arnold, "Life of Arnold," chap. 9; Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. ii, pp. 547-553; Burgoyne, "State of the Expedition from Canada," pp. 60, 69, 70, 77, 102, 103, 125, 162, Appendix No. 14; Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. vi, p. 86 note; Graham, "Life of Morgan," pp. 143-153; Riedesel, *Memoirs*, pp. 143-145; Wilkinson, "Memoirs," vol. i, chap. vi; Anburey, "Travels," vol. i, pp. 410-430.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

soon reinforced by the arrival of Lincoln with 2000 militia and there were other arrivals, until the 7000 of the American army had grown to 11,000.

The inactivity on Burgoyne's part from the 19th of September to the 7th of October, was caused not only by the weak condition of his army, but by a letter received the day after the battle from General Clinton, in New York, who said he would render all the aid he could by attacking as soon as possible the Hudson Highlands at West Point. This information was worse than useless. The force Clinton could bring up was inadequate as well as too late. But Burgoyne, if he followed his instructions, must wait for this assistance, or, perhaps, even press down to meet it. If he had had any thought of being justified in retreating back to Canada, this letter compelled him to dismiss it.

He resolved to wait; and he sent officers in disguise by different routes to Clinton, urging him to send all the assistance he could and the northern army would wait for him where it was until the 12th of October. Burgoyne had calculated that by the 12th of October his provisions would be exhausted, and he must then either advance, surrender or retreat back to Canada.

Meanwhile, the Americans, seeing the whole situation very clearly, and that their game was as good as bagged, spent their time and superior force in annoying the British by small skirmishes and attacks day and night; depriving them of sleep and keeping them so perpetually under fire and on the alert that mere exhaustion would, in time, bring a surrender.

Gates and Arnold had quarrelled; and apparently for no other reason than that Arnold was very friendly with Schuyler whom Gates disliked and by superior influence in Congress had superseded in the northern command. There may have been a deeper cause in the increasing opposition of Gates to Washington and the desire to supersede him. Arnold and Schuyler were both friendly to Washington. Arnold had failed to receive his expected and well deserved promotion; juniors had been promoted over him; he was in a painful position; and



## GATES AND ARNOLD QUARREL

as he naturally looked to Washington for assistance he could be of no use in the private schemes of Gates.

The ill-feeling was very likely brought to a head by the respect shown by both officers and men to Arnold as the general to whom all the honor of the recent battle was due. In his report to Congress Gates made no mention of Arnold or his division. Arnold complained; angry words and letters were exchanged. Gates withdrew Morgan's corps from Arnold's division; told Arnold his services were of little consequence; that he would gladly give him a pass to leave; and turned over Arnold's command to General Lincoln. Arnold was on the point of leaving the army, but was finally induced to remain by a written request signed by all the general officers except Gates and Lincoln.

A crisis was reached in Burgoyne's affairs on the 7th of October by forage becoming so scarce that on that day Burgoyne, full of anxiety and desperation, and hearing no tidings of assistance from the south, moved out of his camp with 1500 men, to see if any forage could be found, or a passage for advancement forced round the left flank of his enemy. If he could neither attack the enemy nor force a passage round him, he intended, Riedesel says, to retreat across the Hudson to his old line of communications and there wait for news from Clinton.<sup>8</sup>

This new move by Burgoyne may be said to have been a very dangerous one to make in the face of an enemy so superior in numbers; and when Burgoyne was afterwards so mercilessly hunted down in England, his enemies had much to say on this point. But when we consider the circumstances in which the unfortunate general now found himself, it is very difficult to decide what he should have done. He was under peremptory orders to push southward, and whether it was better to accept the sure defeat of that or the equally sure disgrace of a retreat back to Canada, might have been settled by the toss of a coin as well as by the most consummate human judgment.

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<sup>8</sup> Riedesel, *Memoirs*, pp. 146, 147; "State of the Expedition," &c., pp. 165-167.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

Gates was surprised at the movement; but quite ready for it, and Morgan was again ordered forward to begin the game. He was supported soon afterwards by the brigades of Poor and Learned; and by these officers and Morgan the battle was stubbornly contested for most of the afternoon, and the British wings and centre forced back for nearly two miles to their redoubts just at sunset.

Arnold deprived of his command had fretted in camp, riding about in great indignation, and, it is said, drinking freely. At last with wild exclamations of excitement he galloped to the fighting; but at what period of the battle has not been determined. He undertook to exercise command; and extravagant and doubtful tales have been told that the whole success of the day was due to him. But his actions confirm the account given by Wilkinson that he had been drinking. He struck a patriot officer with his sword, wounding him on the head and apparently not knowing what he had done darted away to another part of the field. In his frenzy he rode between the fire of the two armies and miraculously escaped unhurt. He may have inspired and encouraged the troops in this way, but his actions were those of a madman rather than of an officer.

Gates, according to one account, sent an officer to recall him from the field and according to another account, to warn him that the present British attack on the American left was a mere feint and that the real attack might be on our right. To which Arnold replied with hot and offensive indignation, that he would take all the responsibility on himself.

On the British side General Frazer seemed to be saving the day, restoring the shattered lines, reforming regiments and encouraging them by his voice and valor. Morgan directed twelve of his riflemen to make sure work of this officer; and by one tradition Arnold suggested this course to Morgan. The riflemen obeyed, and a few moments afterwards Frazer rolled off his horse, while his men, panic-stricken, again gave way before the patriots.

Baroness Riedesel, who had accompanied her husband to the war, had been able to watch the first battle with consid-

## ARNOLD'S HEROISM

erable equanimity probably because her people held their ground. But this second battle greatly terrified her. The furious assaults of the Americans spread dismay and consternation.

"The noise grew dreadful, upon which I was more dead than alive. About 3 o'clock in the afternoon, instead of guests whom I expected to dine with me, I saw one of them, poor General Frazer, brought upon a hand barrow, mortally wounded. The table, which was already prepared for dinner, was immediately removed and a bed placed in its stead for the general. I sat terrified and trembling in a corner. The noise grew more alarming, and I was in a continual agony and tremor while thinking that my husband might soon also be brought in wounded like General Frazer. . . . I heard often amidst his groans, such words as these, 'O bad ambition! poor General Burgoyne! poor Mistress Frazer.'" (Riedesel, *Memoirs*, p. 169.)

At the close of the action near sunset Arnold is said to have collected fifteen or twenty riflemen and carried the German defences by assault. His horse was shot under him just as he entered the breastwork and at the same time a German wounded him in the thigh. The story is told that an American was about to bayonet the German when Arnold stopped him with the order, "Don't hurt him; he only did his duty." Whether we believe or reject all these traditions of his heroism that day there is no doubt that it was the hour for Arnold to have died. Officers like Wilkinson who were eye witnesses of these scenes believed that he rendered no important service and deserved no particular credit. But popular opinion made him the hero of this Second Battle of Saratoga; and even when his name became a by-word of contempt some of the patriots always qualified the infamy with the remembrance of Saratoga. "Cut off the leg that was wounded at Saratoga," said one of them; "and bury it with all the honors of war; and then hang his body on the highest tree."<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Arnold, "Life of Arnold," pp. 191-211; Burgoyne, "State of the Expedition from Canada;" Fonblanque, "Life of Burgoyne;" Wilkinson, "Memoirs," vol. i, chap. vii; Amburey, "Travels," vol. i, p. 436; Gordon, "American Revolution," vol. ii, p. 558.

## LXII.

### THE SURRENDER

DURING the night after the last Battle of Saratoga, the British army in most deplorable distress, with great loss among the officers from the rifle fire of the Americans, retired to higher ground, where the next day they were almost continually cannonaded, but no action was fought. In the dusk of the evening General Frazer was buried in one of the redoubts, in the sight of both armies, carried to the grave at his special request by the soldiers and officers of his own corps. Our troops seeing the movement within the British lines and not knowing that it was a funeral, turned several of their cannon on the redoubt, and the shot scattered dust over the chaplain, Mr. Brudenel, who nevertheless, with steady attitude and unaltered voice, read the burial service through to the end.<sup>1</sup>

That night Burgoyne retreated toward Saratoga, and halted during most of the next day, the 9th of October, to refresh the troops and bring up provisions; but Riedesel appears to have regarded it as a day lost in saving the army. That evening the army retreated again through heavy rain, and they appear to have reached Saratoga during the night in such a state of fatigue that the men had not strength to cut firewood and lay down to sleep in their wet clothes in the continuing rain.

The crossing to the east side of the Hudson was blocked by the enemy; and the only chance of escape lay up the west side of the river. A council of officers agreed upon a plan to accomplish this, by abandoning all the wagons and baggage and making a rapid night march. But the army was so disor-

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<sup>1</sup> "State of the Expedition," &c., pp. 107, 100.





HOUSE IN WHICH BARONESS RIDDLESLI TOOK REFUGE





## SUFFERING OF THE BRITISH

ganized that the necessary provisions could not be distributed and nothing was done. There is a rather doubtful story of Burgoyne saying to the loyalist Colonel Skene, "You have been the occasion of getting me into this difficulty, now advise me how to get out of it;" and Skene replied, "Scatter your baggage and stores and while the rebel militia are scrambling for the plunder your army will have time to escape."<sup>2</sup>

The suffering in the army from fatigue, hunger, wounds, disgrace and hopelessness was terrible, and the Baroness Riedesel has given most affecting descriptions of the scenes. Subordinates and camp followers, of course, thought that an escape might have been effected and blamed all their misfortunes on Burgoyne. The Baroness accuses him of loss of presence of mind, delaying retreat until escape was hopeless, and of enjoying himself in the midst of the sufferings of the army.

"It is very true that General Burgoyne liked to make himself easy, and that he spent half his nights in singing and drinking, and diverting himself with the wife of a commissary who was his mistress, and who was as fond of champagne as himself." (*Memoirs*, p. 176.)

As to escape by retreat, it was probably utterly impossible. At the time of the battle Gates had begun to throw a force in the rear of the British and this force was increased the next day. Burgoyne had better means than his subordinates of knowing the whole situation; and the investigation of his scouts soon showed that Gates had completed his surrounding movement and that every avenue of retreat was cut off.

Never were troops in such a state as his. The Americans kept up such a continuous fire night and day, that the British had not a moment's rest unless they burrowed in the ground. The Baroness, approaching a house for refuge, had suddenly to throw her children into the back of the wagon and lay her-

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<sup>2</sup>"State of the Expedition," &c, pp. 108, 109, 170, 174, 175; Riedesel, *Memoirs*, pp. 149-152; Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. ii, p. 571.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

self upon them in hope of saving them from a volley. She got into the house with them, but had to plunge down into the cellar to escape a cannonade. A soldier whose leg was being amputated in the house had the other leg shot off by one of the balls.

In the cellar she lived for several days, in the horrible stench of the sewage, sharing her quarters promiscuously with wounded or frightened soldiers and officers, who threw themselves frantically into this underground retreat; and on one occasion in such numbers that "every one of us would probably have been crushed to death, had I not put myself before the entrance and resisted the intruders."

On the 13th of October, having only three days' provisions, Burgoyne called a council of officers; but there was scarcely a spot in his camp where the council could sit in safety and while they were deliberating a cannon-shot crossed the table. By the unanimous advice of the council, Burgoyne communicated to Gates his willingness to negotiate terms of surrender. On the 16th, when the terms had been agreed upon, but not signed, an American deserter reached the British camp bringing the news that Clinton was coming up the Hudson and had already taken the forts at the Highlands.

Howe had left Clinton so few men in New York that he could not make a diversion in favor of Burgoyne until some 1700 reinforcements arrived from Europe. The reinforcements were sent in slow-sailing Dutch vessels and did not reach New York until about the 1st of October. As soon as they arrived Clinton lost no time in starting up the Hudson. But when he informed Howe of what he was doing, he was discouraged and requested to send part of his force to Philadelphia to help reduce the forts on the Delaware.<sup>a</sup>

Clinton, however, had started up the Hudson before Howe's

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<sup>a</sup> De Lancey's note to Jones, "New York in the Revolution," vol. i, p. 704; Bancroft, "History of the United States," edition of 1886, vol. v, p. 195; Parliamentary Register, House of Commons, 1779, vol. xiii, pp. 379, 380.

## CLINTON TO THE RESCUE

request for reinforcements reached him, and he proceeded with 4000 men to take the forts near West Point which the patriots had left weakly manned. General Putnam was in command of them with only 1000 men; and although he wrote to the patriot governor of New York for assistance, it could not be obtained before the British were attacking Fort Montgomery in full force. We see how easily an adequate force sent a few weeks earlier by Howe could have saved Burgoyne when we find that Clinton easily took Fort Montgomery by assault with the bayonet, and afterwards possessed himself of the whole Hudson Highlands, capturing the vast supplies of muskets, cannon, ammunition, provisions and military tools and equipments of all kinds, which the patriots had stored in their great stronghold.

Clinton also removed the heavy iron chain weighing 50 tons, with the boom attached, which the patriots at enormous expense had stretched across the river at Fort Montgomery to obstruct the navigation. A smaller boom at Fort Constitution was also removed, and the navigation of the river was now open to the British all the way up to Albany or to Half Moon within sixteen miles of Gates's army.

If Clinton had had a larger force, say eight or ten thousand, and had been only a week earlier, it is easy to see what a dangerous enemy he would have been in the rear of Gates's army. But he was now just too late. He took Fort Montgomery on the 6th of October, only the day before Burgoyne met his disastrous and final defeat at the hands of Gates in what has been called the Second Battle of Saratoga.

But even as it was Clinton seemed to have an opportunity of doing much more mischief to the Americans than he actually accomplished. They fully expected that he would destroy the patriot arsenal at Albany, and quickly come upon the rear of the patriot army. Gates dreaded his approach. But to everybody's surprise Clinton remained at West Point and entrusted the advance towards Albany to a force of only 1700 men under General Vaughan, who with a flood tide could have

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

reached Albany in four hours. Instead of that he stopped at Esopus and wasted all his time in burning the town of Kingston, and ravaging its neighborhood, and never went to Albany or to the assistance of Burgoyne at all.<sup>4</sup>

But when Burgoyne learned from the deserter on the 16th of October, that Fort Montgomery had been taken, he caught eagerly at this last hope, and suggested to his officers that, as the terms of surrender had not been signed, the negotiation might be broken off, and hostilities renewed, until Clinton could come up in the rear of Gates. His officers, however, had already had enough. Some of their troops, they thought, would not fight if the negotiations were broken off; others had not strength enough to fight in a desperate enterprise; and the news of Clinton's coming, having been received from a deserter, was not sufficiently authentic for such a serious change of plan as breaking off negotiations. No doubt, they all felt sure that the situation was really hopeless. But Burgoyne clung to the hope of Clinton to the last and voted against the majority of his officers.

They had already delayed the signing of the terms so long that Gates, fearing that Clinton might attack him in the rear, drew out his army in order of battle on the morning of the 17th, and sent word to Burgoyne that the terms must be signed at once; and they were signed within a few minutes.

In his report to the Congress, Gates described Burgoyne as 'intrenched in a formidable position with twelve days' provisions left and Clinton's force threatening the Albany arsenal. The choice, he said, was presented of accepting the terms Burgoyne wanted and insisting on immediate signature, or of attacking him at once in his strong position, or leaving him in it and falling back to protect the arsenal at Albany. It seemed better to settle the terms of surrender at once, even if

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<sup>4</sup> Jones, "New York in the Revolution," vol. i, pp. 210, 704; Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. vi, pp. 111, 120 notes, 104 and note; Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. ii, pp. 554-558, 579. Gordon states Vaughan's force at 3000; but Clinton gives it as 1700.





THE SURRENDER OF BURGOYNE  
(From a sketch by a German Officer)





## AN UNFORTUNATE MISTAKE

they were more favorable to Burgoyne than might be obtained if the negotiations were prolonged.<sup>6</sup>

Poor Burgoyne felt his situation most keenly. To save his feelings the word surrender was not used, and the document was called "A convention between Lieutenant General Burgoyne and Major General Gates." The American general spared Burgoyne's feelings as far as possible, and, whether from kindness or apprehension of Clinton in his rear, was magnanimously liberal and easy. The Americans of that time seem to have felt considerable sympathy for Burgoyne, probably because they saw that his misfortunes were not his own fault. Gates allowed Burgoyne's troops to pile their arms at command of their own officers, and out of sight of the Americans. In most respects the surrender followed the usual forms. But the apprehension of what Clinton might do in his rear seems to have forced Gates to undue haste or carelessness in wording the treaty, and too much advantage was given the British, which afterwards caused much controversy and ill feeling.

The surrendered troops were to be sent to Boston as prisoners of war and then sent to England on their parole not to serve against the Americans until regularly exchanged. But while the troops waited near Boston, various disputes arose; and it was soon seen that Gates in his haste and fear of Clinton, had made a great mistake. The troops while on their parole in England could not serve against America; but they could serve against France, if she became our ally; and they could serve in India or any British possession not American, or on garrison duty in England, and thus relieve forces which could be sent to America. In this way most of the advantage of the victory at Saratoga would be lost to the patriots.

Burgoyne's whole army were surprised at obtaining such favorable terms; and he and his officers when they returned

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<sup>6</sup> Journals of Congress, vol. ii, p. 310; Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. ii, pp. 566-581; St. Clair Papers, vol. i, p. 88; "Diary and Letters of Thomas Hutchinson," vol. ii, p. 154.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

to England, boasted of their success. It is not surprising, therefore, that the Congress found many causes of delay. Washington, and also, it is said, Lafayette, urged the Congress to delay returning the convention troops to England as long as possible, so that they could not be used against France. The English, Washington said, would not regard the terms of the convention if they once got these men back again, but would use them against America the following year, as they had done in a similar case after the convention of Closter Seven.<sup>a</sup>

A suspicion arose that if Burgoyne once set sail from Boston with his men, he might carry them into New York to help Howe. It was also said that inasmuch as General Howe would not agree to any equitable arrangement for the exchange of prisoners, it was rather absurd to return a whole captured army to England on bare parole.

Burgoyne, who was at times injudicious, and went to extremes in the use of language, very soon declared that the American public faith plighted at Saratoga had been broken because the officers among the prisoners were not given as good accommodations as were promised. He also asked leave to embark his men at Rhode Island or in Long Island Sound, near New York, both of which points were in possession of the British.

The Congress immediately took advantage of his assertions and requests by declaring that if he thought that good faith was broken, he could not be trusted to carry out the convention after he set sail, but would probably avail himself of such pretended breach to disregard all the terms of the convention. His troops must, accordingly, be kept in America until the British Government itself explicitly ratified the convention. But even after this ratification further disputes arose about furnishing lists of the prisoners. There was much

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<sup>a</sup> "State of the Expedition," &c., pp. 75, 179; Fonblanque, "Life of Burgoyne," pp. 308, 324; Lee, *Memoirs*, vol. i, pp. 8 note, 203 note; Wilkinson, "Memoirs," vol. i, chap. viii.

## THE CONVENTION PRISONERS

unpleasant controversy and recrimination between the two countries, and Burgoyne's army, except himself and some officers, remained prisoners in America for the rest of the war. They were kept near Boston until November, 1778, when they were sent to Charlottesville, Virginia, and on the approach of Cornwallis's army, in 1781, they were moved up into Pennsylvania to prevent their rescue by Tarleton and Simcoe.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> As to the controversy over our failure to return the convention troops, see Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. vi, pp. 175, 190 note, 225, 234, 246, 247, 283, 293, 369 note; vol. vii, 222 note, 270 note; Riedesel, *Memoirs*, p. 162; Lamb, "Journal of American War," chap. x; Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iii, pp. 44, 45, 48, 49, 117; Jones, "New York in the Revolution," vol. i, pp. 210-214, 698.

## LXIII.

### BURGOYNE'S RECEPTION IN ENGLAND

BURGOYNE surrendered about 3500 rank and file fit for duty, which was all that was left of the seven or eight thousand who had started with him from Canada. By a return of his troops which Gates handed to Burgoyne, the American army without counting those sick and on furlough, numbered 20,907. If this return was correct, Gates's army was as large and probably more efficient than the army collected under Washington in 1776 to prevent Howe taking New York. Burgoyne was glad to learn of this large number, because it showed that his surrender had been brought about by the overwhelming odds of more than five to one. But like so many statements of numbers in the Revolution, the correctness of the return has been doubted; and it is said to have been exaggerated beyond the actual number of about 11,000 in order, as some have thought, to soothe Burgoyne's feelings, or more probably, to give him such an impression of our force as we should wish him to report in England on his return.<sup>1</sup>

The battles of this campaign, it will be observed, were fought by the Americans by direct front action with but little attempt at flanking movements; and this seems to have been the plan agreed upon by Gates and his officers as the most effective method. Washington protested against it and in an interesting letter recommended the superior advantage at all times of flank movements which kept the enemy continually harassed and in fear. But the country was so heavily wooded

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<sup>1</sup> "State of the Expedition," &c., pp. 97, 110, 111; De Lancey's note to Jones, "New York in the Revolution," vol. i, p. 674; Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. vi, pp. 150, 502. See also Parliamentary Register, House of Commons, 1779, vol. 13, pp. 110, 259, 260, 269.

## WHO SHALL BEAR THE BLAME

that elaborate flank movements might have been impractical for Gates, whose brain could grasp only the simplest military ideas. He seems to have understood the situation, and possibly his own limitations, and his method was certainly successful.<sup>2</sup>

It was characteristic of the times and of the people that some of the militia regiments were in such a hurry to return to their farms and business, that as soon as they saw that Burgoyne was hopelessly crippled they deliberately deserted in a body and returned home without waiting to see the ceremony of the surrender. After the surrender, and after Vaughan and Clinton retired to New York on the 26th of October, there was no one who could hold Gates's large army together and it melted away like snow.<sup>3</sup>

Burgoyne returned to England on his parole in May, 1778, and Washington would have been glad to have had him go sooner; for the longer he remained in the country, the more he learned of our military weakness. When he resumed his seat in Parliament he found himself in a most extraordinary position, and the most unfortunate man in the world.

As soon as the news of his surrender had reached England on the 2nd of December, 1777, the question at once arose as to who should bear the blame for this dreadful calamity which was convulsing the whole country. It lay among three persons, Germain the representative of the Ministry who had drawn the plan of the expedition and issued the instructions, Howe who had abandoned the expedition to its fate by going to Pennsylvania, and Burgoyne who had commanded the expedition and surrendered the army.

The Ministry quickly decided to make no direct attack upon Howe. He had not surrendered an army; the charges and suspicions against him were largely matters of inference and opinion; and in the beginning of the war his efforts at compromise had been associated with the similar efforts or olive branch policy of the Ministry. Burgoyne was accordingly

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<sup>2</sup> Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. v, p. 34.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*, vol. vii, p. 154 note.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

selected as the victim and before he reached England the Ministerial flood-gates of abuse through hack writers, henchmen and office-seekers had been opened upon him.

Upon his arrival he was peremptorily refused an audience with the King. He demanded a court-martial, but was refused because he was still a paroled prisoner; and the Ministry attempted to deprive him of his seat and voice in Parliament, because as a paroled prisoner he was incapable of performing any public act civil or military. Courtiers and aristocracy treated him with every mark of disgrace. He was assailed with violent abuse and studied contempt, as the only man in English history who had surrendered a British army to rebels and militiamen.<sup>4</sup>

They denounced every act and decision of his expedition. Every inference that would convict him of an atrocious fault was drawn; and they assailed what they called his final treaty with rebels as a national disgrace. It is curious to find him laboring to show them that such treaties were by no means unheard of. Had not Spain, the haughtiest of nations, made a treaty with the arch rebel the great Prince of Orange? Had not Charles the First made a treaty with the rebels under Cromwell? and had not General Howe attempted negotiations with the American rebels?

But you, they said to him, surrendered not only to rebels and militia but to poltroons, and cowards, incapable of fighting; and, in his defence afterwards published, we find Burgoyne continually arguing against this feeling, this "courtly topic" as he calls it, of American cowardice which had become a deep rooted belief among some of the upper classes of the English. He was, it seems, the first Englishman who undertook to disabuse the minds of his countrymen on this subject, and explain to them that they had quite mistaken the organizing abilities of Schuyler, Lincoln, and even Gates, as well as

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<sup>4</sup> Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. vi, p. 502; Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iii, pp. 70, 113; Fonblanque, "Life of Burgoyne," pp. 344-350.



## BURGOYNE TURNS WHIG

the valor and fighting intelligence of the rank and file when led by such field officers as Morgan, Learned, and Arnold.

Refused a court-martial and at the same time forbidden to appear in Court, he was under royal and public condemnation and yet could not be tried or defend himself. He kept calling for a Parliamentary investigation and when it was repeatedly refused, he began a systematic attack upon the Ministry, and Germain in particular as the cause of the failure of his expedition.

He could do nothing else. He had always been a moderate Tory, but the Ministry were turning him into a Whig. He had at first, it is said, intended to charge Howe with leaving him to be sacrificed. But the Whigs were anxious to add him to their ranks, and offered to help him exonerate himself if he would agree to throw all the blame for his misfortunes not on their own party man Howe, but on Germain and the Ministry. This condition he appears to have accepted and fulfilled to the letter.<sup>5</sup>

The Ministry very naturally became more hostile to him than ever when they found that he was becoming a Whig. In order to rid themselves of his attacks and demands for a Parliamentary inquiry, which they knew would be merely a Whig assault on Germain, they procured an order for his return to his imprisoned troops in America. Against this order he pleaded the condition of his health and the hardships of being sent back untried and unheard on the charges against him. Another order of the same sort was procured and this one he deliberately disobeyed on the ground that it was an unconstitutional exercise of power, that it was issued for mere private vengeance to close his mouth in Parliament and send him to America, where his ill health or the ill will of the people might prevent his returning alive. If the order had been issued for military discipline, he would, he said, have obeyed it; but as it was issued to prevent his giving information to Parliament,

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<sup>5</sup> Fonblanque, "Life of Burgoyne," p. 351 note; "Diary and Letters of Thomas Hutchinson," vol. ii, pp. 210, 256, 257, 261, 336.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

and as it was a prostitution of military command to political craft, he considered himself justified in disregarding it.<sup>6</sup>

He persisted in this act of disobedience to orders for which ordinarily officers are court-martialed, and severely punished. But he seems to have persisted with impunity, and his courage and persistence were finally rewarded in the spring of 1779, by the granting of a Parliamentary inquiry into his conduct at the same time that an inquiry was made into the conduct of General Howe.

Howe's statement and witnesses were first heard before Parliament sitting as Committee of the Whole, and after that Burgoyne brought forward his documents and witnesses. All this evidence delighted the Whigs because it seemed to show not only that the war had been badly conducted by the Ministry, but that it was impracticable. Germain then opened the case of the government against Howe, but had not finished examining his second witness when Parliament was prorogued by the King, to the great satisfaction of the Whigs, who had now become very much opposed to the continuation of the investigation because the witnesses called by Germain tended to prove that the war if conducted by good officers was perfectly practicable and might be made successful.<sup>7</sup>

The two inquiries having been cut short by the prorogation were never taken up again. Burgoyne's witnesses had been cross examined but no government witnesses had been brought against him, so that the investigation was incomplete and inconclusive. All he could do was to publish the testimony and documents that had been presented with his own argument and narrative in a volume called "The State of the Expedition from Canada," already often cited in these pages, and an important source of information on his campaign. Howe also

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<sup>6</sup> "State of the Expedition from Canada," pp. 181-187; Fonblanque, "Life of Burgoyne," p. 357; also, pp. 351, 355, 302, 375.

<sup>7</sup> "Diary and Letters of Thomas Hutchinson," vol. ii, pp. 256, 257, 261, 336, and note at end of introduction of Burgoyne's "State of the Expedition from Canada."

## BURGOYNE'S DEFENCE

published a defence of himself, or "Narrative" as he called it, but it was very different in character from Burgoyne's.

Burgoyne's statements are straightforward and his argument strong and fully supported by the evidence. There are none of the subtleties and obscurities, none of the surprising assertions or suspicious explanations which we find in Howe's defence. Burgoyne disposes of every charge of his enemies, frees himself from blame, and shows that his surrender was the inevitable result of the failure of Howe to come up the Hudson to meet him. But in accordance with his understanding with the Whigs, he throws the blame not on Howe, but on Germain, who failed, he said, to send Howe peremptory instructions to go up in force to Albany. The Whig party also made the same argument, that Howe had no instructions about Burgoyne's expedition and was entirely justified in not moving up the Hudson.<sup>8</sup>

Burgoyne still considered himself entitled to a complete trial and acquittal, in the most legal and formal manner, and asked for a court-martial. It was bluntly refused him; his request for further service in the war was also denied; and he then resigned all his military appointments with their £3000 a year, the professional attainments of a lifetime, retaining only his lieutenant-generalship, the basis of his parole and which he hoped might also be the basis of a court-martial.

He never obtained the court-martial and it would probably have been of little use, for all Tory England had made up their minds about him. Thackeray, who always kept close to fashionable sentiment, describes him in his "Lives of the Georges" as "tripping down St. James Street on his way to beat the Americans, and slinking back to his club crestfallen after his defeat."

It was a grossly unjust slur; for the vigorous manner in which Burgoyne defended his reputation could hardly be called slinking. He remained in Parliament for many years

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<sup>8</sup> "State of the Expedition from Canada," pp. ix, 180; Fonblanque, "Life of Burgoyne," p. 348; *Annual Register*, 1770, chap. vii.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

taking a conspicuous part in debates on India and on questions relating to the army, and he helped to conduct the impeachment of Warren Hastings in 1787. When the Whigs went into power in 1782 he was appointed a member of the privy council and made Commander of the Forces in Ireland. He returned to his amusement of play writing and attained greater success than ever. "The Heiress" was a great hit. "Burgoyne's battles and speeches will be forgotten," wrote Horace Walpole; "but his delightful comedy of 'The Heiress' still continues the delight of the stage.'"<sup>9</sup>

It is the speeches and comedies, however, that have been forgotten and the battles remembered to the discredit of their commander. In spite of all preaching to the contrary, Thackeray's contemptuous phrase remained and probably will remain the popular opinion in England. He surrendered a British army to rebels and militiamen, is their way of summing up poor Burgoyne; and it is one of the curious inconsistencies of English opinion, that Lord Cornwallis, who four years afterwards surrendered, entirely through his own fault and gross blunders, a similar army to the same rebels, suffered not the slightest discredit in England. Instead of public abuse and Ministerial and royal disfavor, he was almost immediately made Governor General of India, and enjoyed for the rest of his life all the opportunities of a favorite of the people and the Crown.

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<sup>9</sup> Fonblanque, "Life of Burgoyne," pp. 383, 387, 400, 401, 405, 402, 408, 433, 447, 453, 462.

## LXIV.

### THE ALLIANCE WITH FRANCE

THE combination of circumstances which led to the surrender at Saratoga, made a great change in the Revolution. Our country became involved in general European politics, England's attitude toward us was totally changed, and the Ministry abandoned altogether the olive branch policy which the Howes were believed to have carried out not wisely but too well.

It was a wonderful and glorious event, that surrender; and for a year it rejuvenated the patriots and filled them with the highest hopes. For two years they had suffered continuous defeat, with their cause believed by many to be on the eve of collapsing into mere predatory and bandit warfare with no prospect of open assistance from France, Spain or Holland. But suddenly a whole British army surrendered to a mixed force of militia continentals and hunters commanded by an officer of little or no military reputation. Nothing could have been better calculated to arouse confidence and respect for us in France.

The French King, Louis XVI, was a ruler of very good intentions, commonplace ability and unusually correct morals for a French monarch. One of his most important traits, so far as we were concerned, was that he believed in the French navy and intended to promote its efficiency which had been begun under the old minister Choiseul. He supported its dignity and increased its strength and spirit. *It became more* nearly a match for England's navy than it had ever been before or ever was again. Its officers were burning to meet the British; and in the end this temporary superiority of France upon the ocean saved our Revolution at the last moment.

Our people for many years in toasts and addresses were



## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

fond of speaking of the French King as the Great Protector of the Rights of Humanity. But he had no sympathy whatever with the republican ideas of the American patriots and believed that their rebellion was a pernicious example for the colonies of France and Spain. England, however, had recently humiliated France by depriving her of Canada and several smaller possessions, weakening her foothold in India, breaking up her commerce, and, worst of all, placing the port of Dunkirk on her own soil under the government of an English commissioner. The whole French nation was thirsting for revenge. In fact all continental Europe was thirsting for revenge, because England searched their merchant ships as she pleased. Spain was thirsting for revenge because the English still held Gibraltar and Minorca, the strongholds of the Mediterranean, and Jamaica, the basis of naval power in the Spanish main. France as the strongest nation of the continent was expected to lead an attack upon England at the first opportunity.

It was the obviously sound policy. The American colonists had helped England take Canada from France; and unless America was separated from England would not this huge confederacy of the Anglo-Saxon race become so powerful that they would take from France her West India sugar islands worth 280,000,000 francs in capital and 80,000,000 francs in revenue? Might they not even subdue France herself and endanger the stability of the whole continent of Europe? The great problem of the age was England's sea power. The Americans were such skillful sailors that if they remained united to England this united sea power of the Anglo-Saxon race would surely dominate the world. But America independent would in time be a great sea power to check the arrogance of the British navy.

These were the considerations which could not be ignored. The French Secretary of Foreign Affairs, the Count de Vergennes, a man of attractive character, an experienced diplomat and statesman and a great friend of Franklin, had used his utmost endeavors, as soon as the rebellion began, to persuade



## POLICY OF FRANCE

the King of the necessity of helping the Americans. He had sent Beaumarchais to England to study the situation and write letters to the King. Emissaries had been sent to America, and the most accurate information collected from every quarter. Turgot, the French Secretary of Finance, admitted that assistance to the Americans seemed inevitable; but he regretted such an expensive necessity, which would probably bankrupt the nation, and he never became an active advocate of the policy.

The King and the government, however, were effectually won over to that policy; and to their cool minds, surveying the situation with exact knowledge of details, it seemed that the Americans would of themselves be able to resist England for a time. France need not hurry. Let her at first assist them by secretly sending weapons and supplies and watch the result. It would be well that England should exhaust and weaken herself somewhat before France openly took part with the Americans. In accordance with this plan the secret supplies had been sent by Beaumarchais and his romantic firm of Hortalez & Company. But now Great Britain was surely much weakened by the loss of Burgoyne's army, so what need was there for further secrecy or hesitation? <sup>1</sup>

News of Burgoyne's surrender was received in France on the 4th of December, and the effect of it is quite apparent when we find that the preliminary articles of a treaty of alliance with the Americans were signed on the 17th of January and the final treaty on the 6th of February. This promptness on the part of the French Court was largely induced by their knowledge that the English Ministry were about to offer to the Americans very liberal terms of compromise; in fact a return to the semi-independence that prevailed before 1763 and the same terms of freedom from Parliament that the Congress itself had proposed in 1774. The French Court feared that the Americans in their weakness, and not feeling

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<sup>1</sup> Duand, "New Materials for History of American Revolution," pp. 31, 36, 46, 47, 51, 54, 80-82.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

sure of assistance from France, might be led to accept this compromise, which would reunite the Anglo-Saxon race and defeat all the purposes France had in view. A treaty of alliance must at once be made with the Americans, promising to help them obtain absolute independence, while they, on their side, promised to make no compromise with England and to accept nothing short of absolute independence.

The King did this in spite of the doubts and protests of some of his important ministers. But it was on the whole a very popular act in France. The court and the aristocracy admired Franklin and *les insurgents* more than ever and took upon themselves the task of giving them independence. It was certainly curious, and to some minds inconsistent, that this great assistance, the greatest perhaps that was ever given to Anglo-Saxon ideas of liberty and self-government, was given by the French nation and a French king, a Celt, half Bourbon and half Pole, at the height of the reign of despotism in France.<sup>2</sup>

Our alliance with France led naturally to other assistance. The Spanish Government under the influence of its minister, Florida Blanca, was at first opposed to giving aid to such extreme republicans as the Americans, who were likely to prove, and certainly have proved, a dangerous example to the people of Spain's South American and West Indian colonies. Spain was also anxious for the safety of her silver fleet from South America and some troops that were to return from Buenos Ayres. But at the same time Spain was very anxious for an opportunity to drive England from Gibraltar and she saw clearly enough that if America remained a part of the British empire such a stupendous power would in the future be fully as dangerous to her colonial possessions as American independence and republicanism. Moreover, Spain being ruled by the house of Bourbon was naturally in close sympathy with France. It was not long before she yielded to

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<sup>2</sup> Stedman, "American War," vol. ii, p. 5; Buell, "Life of Paul Jones," vol. i, pp. 94-98.

## FRANKLIN, LEE AND DEANE

the influence of France and began to supply the American patriots with money, sent through France, without the knowledge of England, to whose government the warmest expressions of regard were given. In the end, France persuaded Spain to make open war upon England; and the active assistance of Holland as well as the sympathy and passive encouragement of Russia and Frederick of Germany, was no doubt greatly encouraged by the example of France and Spain.

The assistance of France was now open and avowed, and Beaumarchais and his firm of Mortalez & Company are no longer of importance. At Passy, a suburb of Paris, Franklin lived for the rest of the war, delighting the whole French nation by his wit and homely wisdom, and representing the American Congress in the most effective manner by his sure friendship with Vergennes and his popularity with the Court, the men of science and the people.

Round his colossal ability and steadfast course fluttered at times other American agents, Arthur Lee, a malign character, and Silas Deane, a hardworking and useful representative but ruined in reputation by the spite of Lee. There was Edward Bancroft, a clever adventurer, strongly suspected of giving information to the British; and Ralph Izard, a very sincere South Carolina patriot, sent by the Congress to the Duke of Tuscany, but anxious for higher employment, and a vigorous hater of Franklin. John Adams was also there, vain, jealous of Franklin, deeply suspicious that France intended to free America and then enslave her, quarrelling with Vergennes, and smoothing it over; and, after acting the part of a bull in a china shop, departing for Holland, where he was of some use and negotiated a loan. Loans were steadily negotiated in France; and when we look back at the services of that nation we find that she furnished nearly the whole naval force; most of the credit and money, a large part of the troops, guns and military supplies at a cost to herself of over twelve hundred and eighty million francs. It was this crippling expense that caused Turgot's lukewarmness to the

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

alliance and it no doubt increased the financial difficulties which led to the French revolution.<sup>3</sup>

With such results, the surrender of Burgoyne, whether caused by his own fault, or by Howe or by Germain, was a momentous event and has been rightfully regarded as a great turning-point in the Revolution. It hardly, however, deserves the name of a decisive event; for it did not end the war and was not the final turning-point. It secured for us foreign aid, but a long time elapsed before that aid could be brought to bear upon the contest. Spain did not declare war and join her forces to those of France until the summer of 1779; Holland's assistance came a year later; and even France, from whose activity we expected so much, could at first accomplish nothing. Her attempts to assist us during the autumn following the alliance and for nearly two years afterwards were utter failures because her whole energy was absorbed in defending her West India possessions from the enraged assaults of the English. Her admirals were instructed to help the Americans only in the intermission of active operations in the West Indies; and the first fleets she sent to our coast were defeated or rendered useless by the energy and desperation of the English. She sent no army to us until the summer of 1780, and then it was immediately blockaded by the English at Newport, where it remained useless until the summer of 1781. In short, it was not until that summer of 1781, that the aid of France became really effective.<sup>4</sup>

The consequence of these failures was that within a year after the French alliance, all the expected results of Burgoyne's surrender seemed to have evaporated and the patriot cause sank before the changed and more vigorous policy of Great Britain under a general of more straightforward ability than Howe. Indeed, in 1780, American independence was on

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<sup>3</sup> Parson, "Life of Franklin;" Sumner, "Financier and Finances of the Revolution;" Durand, "New Material for History of the American Revolution;" Wharton, "Diplomatic Correspondence of the Revolution."

<sup>4</sup> Lee, *Memoirs*, vol. i, p. 99.



## EFFECT OF THE ALLIANCE

the verge of extinction, when suddenly there was a change and another turning-point was brought about by the blunder of the English general Cornwallis, in forcing the adoption of a new and mistaken method of conducting the war. This turning-point, which led directly to the end, was marked by the curious and interesting Battle of King's Mountain. Without the aid of this mistake of Cornwallis, all our aid from France and Spain would apparently have been of no avail.

But we are more concerned at present with the immediate effect of the French alliance, which when it became known in England, in the spring of 1778, threw the whole Tory party and all London society into a state of dejection, gloom and perplexity which Governor Hutchinson has graphically described in his diary.<sup>5</sup> The people had hesitated about going to war with the colonies because England had just come out of a long war with France, in which a national debt of such vast proportions had been incurred that it seemed to imply national bankruptcy and decay; and now England was involved in war with both France and the colonies, with a prospect of serious European complications and a loss of position and prestige in India.

The effect upon the Whigs was to confirm them in their argument, that the American war was an impossible one, and should at once be stopped in order to save England's other possessions from France and Spain. But the Ministry and the Tories were aroused to greater and more determined exertion. They resolved to make one more supreme effort to compromise with the colonists by offering some concession that might draw them away from France; and if that failed, to change the whole character of the war and assail both the colonists and France in the most relentless manner with the full power of the British army and navy.

Among the loyalists the French alliance was regarded as

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<sup>5</sup> "Diary and Letters of Thomas Hutchinson," vol. ii, pp. 186, 187, 189, 190, 193, 198, 199.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

a horror and an infamy far worse than the Declaration of Independence. That Protestant colonists should ally themselves with the great Roman Catholic monarchy, the ancient enemy of the Anglo-Saxon race, and ally themselves for the purpose of making war upon their own faithful and loving mother, England, was a depth of degradation to which, they declared, they had thought it impossible for Americans to descend. They saw in it nothing but ruin, and the Romanizing of America under despotic government.

For the rest of the war, and even for some time afterwards, loyalist newspapers and writers never wearied of describing the details of this ruin which they saw so clearly appearing. They were sure that parts of America had been ceded to France by secret clauses in the treaty or would be demanded at the end of the war, and at times they named the particular states. French vessels were on their way to America laden with tons of holy water, casks of consecrated oil, chests of beads, crucifixes, consecrated wafers, mass books, and bales of indulgences, besides the wheels, hooks and pincers of the Inquisition. Franklin had been decorated, they said, with the order of the Holy Cross of Jerusalem. Dancing masters, fiddlers, and friseurs were on their way to the Puritans of New England. Portable soup, garlic and dried frogs were being prepared for importation; and a contract had been signed to build a Bastille in New York.<sup>6</sup>

As we look back through a perspective of nearly a hundred and fifty years, all this seems very ridiculous. But in 1778 thousands of American loyalists sacrificed their property and their lives to their belief in such arguments; and in 1779 and 1780, when it was thought that the independence movement had fallen in spite of the aid of France, there were patriots who became convinced by such arguments and thought the French alliance a deplorable mistake.

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<sup>6</sup> See Van Tyne's "Loyalists," pp. 152-156, for an excellent summary of the loyalist point of view.



## LOYALIST VIEWS

To put down the rebellion and save America from the terrible fate in store for her, loyalists like Judge Jones of New York, and William Franklin, the governor of New Jersey, called for the most relentless severity, slaughter, hanging, exile, and confiscation, the severity that had been inflicted upon Ireland,—no mercy to men, women, or children, the same call which, in our own time, we have heard from literary men of England for effecting the extermination of the Boer republics.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Jones, "New York in the Revolution," vol. ii, p. 27; Bancroft, "History of the United States," edition 1886, vol. v, pp. 294, 327.

## LXV.

### ANOTHER QUIET WINTER AND SPRING

THE first news of Burgoyne's surrender seems to have reached Howe about the 20th of October, some two weeks after the Battle of Germantown; for on the 22nd of that month we find him writing to Germain that he had heard a rebel rumor of Burgoyne's surrender, but that he did not believe it. He is greatly surprised, he says, to hear that Burgoyne had complained of the failure to coöperate with him. He thought that it was distinctly understood, through his letters to Carleton and to the Ministry, that "no direct assistance could be given by the Southern army." He then adds that so little attention has been given to his recommendations that he would like to be recalled and allowed to resign from "this very painful service, wherein I have not the good fortune to enjoy the necessary confidence and support of my superiors."<sup>1</sup>

But it was many months before this resignation could be accepted, and meantime he remained in Philadelphia where, as in New York, he and his army surrounded themselves with gaiety of every kind—cricket, theatricals, cock-fights, balls, music, and the wit, clever verses and sketches of André. Their peaceful sojourn in the town from the 26th of September, 1777, to the 18th of June, 1778, this carrying on of war and conquest by post holding as it was called, may have been an inferior military method, but it was a source of great enjoyment and an unrivalled opportunity for social advancement to the upper classes of the loyalists who worshipped everything English.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Parliamentary Register, House of Commons, 1779, vol. xi, p. 437; Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. vi, pp. 128, 129, 142, 155 and note.

<sup>2</sup> Jones, "New York in the Revolution," vol. i, p. 717.

## SUFFERING AT VALLEY FORGE

It was a strange scene in the good old Quaker town with the rebel prisoners eating rats in the Walnut Street jail, while the commissary of prisoners grew rich, and extravagance, speculation, gambling, and European indifference to morals filled the respectable, plain brick houses. A Hessian officer held the bank at the game of faro and made a considerable fortune by ruining young Englishmen, some of whom were obliged to sell their commissions and go home penniless. The officers made no attempt to keep their mistresses in the background. One of them drove in her carriage with footmen up and down the lines at a review of the troops, dressed in a costume that was a feminine imitation of the uniform of her paramour's regiment.<sup>3</sup>

Washington remained unmolested at Valley Forge until the following summer. All he had to do, all he could do, was to play the long waiting game with Howe's post-holding system. \* The Pennsylvania patriots were clamorous for an attack on the British in Philadelphia; but Washington and his officers, of course, declined to attempt such a mad enterprise. Howe, on the other hand, could have attacked Washington at almost any time at Valley Forge and destroyed or captured his starving army, with far less difficulty than he had taken Red Bank and Fort Mifflin. Howe had 20,000 men. Washington had nominally 9000, counting the sick, starved, and half-naked, and by March 3000 had deserted to the British, and so many others were sick or at home that there were only 4000 men at Valley Forge.

They had neither coats, hats, shirts nor shoes; they sat shivering around fires in their huts, remaining whole days without provisions; and their feet and legs were often frozen. Several times Washington found that he could not send out a force to attack a British foraging party, because there was no food to send with the men, and a dangerous mutiny had begun among them. That such a disorganized army of four

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<sup>3</sup>Sargent, "*Life of André*," p. 145; Stedman, "*American War*," vol. i, p. 309, London, 1794.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

thousand naked, shivering invalids should remain unmolested for six months within twenty miles of twenty thousand well fed British troops, is one of the most curious events that ever happened.

The British sent foraging parties in every direction through the neighboring counties. It seemed absolutely impossible that the patriot force could remain at Valley Forge. Washington frequently expected his men to break up and scatter within a few days; "starve, dissolve or disperse in order to obtain subsistence." At times it seemed to him that a storm or three or four days of bad weather, would be the destruction of his whole army. In February he could no longer refrain from expressing his admiration for the "incomparable patience and fidelity of the remnant who, naked and starving, had nevertheless, stood by him through the winter and refrained from mutiny and dispersion."<sup>4</sup>

But even when he was expressing this admiration we find General Varnum writing "that in all human probability the army must soon dissolve." They had been deserting during the winter in tens and fifties, and Galloway reported that over two thousand came to his office in Philadelphia. Many of them reached the town half naked, barefooted, a tattered blanket strapped to their waists; and their first thought was to sell their guns to buy food.<sup>5</sup>

Everybody wondered why Howe did not attack Valley Forge. In such an attack, if the patriot troops had decided

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<sup>4</sup> Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. vi, pp. 257, 258, 370, 381 note, 430, 487; Drake, "Life of General Knox," pp. 55, 56; *Historical Magazine*, May, 1861.

<sup>5</sup> Stedman, "American War," pp. 308, 310, London, 1794; Parliamentary Register, House of Commons, 1779, vol. xi, p. 405; G. W. Greene, "Life of Nathanael Greene," vol. i, pp. 530-541; Van Tyne, "Loyalists," p. 157; Bolton, "Private Soldier under Washington," p. 240; Jones, "New York in the Revolution," vol. i, pp. 236, 237; "Memoirs and Correspondence of Lafayette," edition of 1837, vol. i, p. 35; Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. vi, pp. 253, 257, 258, 261, 262, 267, 280, 358, 361, 370, 381 note.

## WEAKNESS OF VALLEY FORGE

to defend their trenches, the British would probably have suffered considerable loss before conquering; but the assault would have been worth all it would cost, and by such assaults victories have been won and wars ended.

"Every military man," said Galloway, "indeed every man of common sense who was acquainted with the different force of the two armies, and Washington's position, expected daily to see his camp assaulted or besieged, more especially in the months of March, April and May, when the inclemency of the weather had ceased, because they knew the assault was then practicable, with ease and little risk. Washington often, during this time, had not three days' provisions in his camp and sometimes not a sufficiency for one day." ("Letters to a Nobleman on the Conduct of the War," 3d edition, London, 1780, p. 88.)

Washington frankly admitted the weakness of his position, which he said he could not have defended and could not even have retreated from for want of the means of transportation; and he was much surprised that Howe took no advantage of it.<sup>6</sup> Howe defended himself in his usual way by suggesting that nothing very important would be gained by an attack and that he was expecting that a compromise would be arranged.

"The entrenched situation of the enemy at Valley Forge, twenty-two miles from Philadelphia, did not occasion any difficulties so pressing as to justify an attack upon that strong post during the severe weather, and though everything was prepared with that intention, I judged it imprudent, until the season should afford a prospect of reaping the advantages, that ought to have resulted from success in that measure; but having good information in the spring that the enemy had strengthened the camp by additional works, and being certain of moving him from thence when the campaign should open, I dropped all thoughts of an attack. My letter of the 19th of April, 1778, gives further reasons for this part of my conduct." ("Narrative of Lieut. Gen. Sir William Howe," London, 1780, p. 30.)

In other words, he thought it imprudent to attack eight thousand with twenty thousand in the severe weather; and in spring, although his enemy had sunk to four thousand, he still thought it imprudent because the enemy would be

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<sup>6</sup> Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. 8, p. 504.



## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

more easily moved in summer. But Washington's force always began to increase about May or June, and in summer he usually could muster about ten thousand men. The time to attack him was when he was weakest, in March and April; for in summer he would move from Valley Forge of his own accord and perhaps attack Howe.

Howe's letter of the 19th of April, 1778, to which he refers as giving further reasons, reveals his real motive.

"The enemy's position continues to be at Valley Forge and Wilmington; their force has been diminished during the course of the winter by desertion, and by detachments to the back settlements, where the Indians make constant incursions; but the want of green forage does not yet permit me to take the field, and their situation too strong to hazard an attack with a prospect of success, which might put an end to the rebellion; whereas a check at this period would probably counteract his majesty's intentions of preparing the way for the return of peace by the bills proposed." (Parliamentary Register, House of Commons, 1778-1779, vol. xi, p. 465.)

Here we have his old excuse, that the loyalists ridiculed so much, of never taking the field until the grass had grown long enough for his horses; and the last words of the letter refer to some bills which had been introduced in Parliament appointing a peace commission to go out to America and negotiate a compromise. Howe eagerly seized on this proposal of a peace commission as an excuse for inactivity, because it was exactly in line with his whole policy from the beginning, that the object to be aimed at was not subjugation or conquest, but a compromise.

The assault on Valley Forge which Galloway and Stedman recommended, would have been made up the east side of the hill with heavy supporting forces placed on both the patriot flanks. Another method would have been for the British to surround Valley Forge with a wide circle of troops so as to cut off entirely all its slender supplies and communications. But the great distance to be covered by this second method would have spread out the British in such attenuated lines that a very inferior force could have cut through them, broken up



## GENERAL HOWE'S DOG

their communications and thrown them into confusion. In reply to a friendly warning that such a surrounding plan might be attempted Washington declared that he had no fear of it.

"It is a project which appears to me totally impracticable with the enemy's present force, or even with one much greater; and I believe the experiment will hardly be made. The extensive line or rather circle they must occupy, to keep up the communication from post to post, necessary to intercept our intercourse with the country, would be very little able to defend themselves at any given point, and would expose them to ruin in case of an attack from us." (Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. vi, p. 383.)

A Frenchman, the Chevalier de Pontgibaud, who spent part of the winter at Valley Forge, says that they became so entirely free from any apprehension of the enemy that they had almost forgotten that the great British army was only twenty miles away. But one day they were reminded of its presence by a fine sporting dog, evidently lost, coming into the dining room at headquarters to beg for something to eat. On its collar were the words General Howe; and it was promptly returned under a flag of truce to its owner in Philadelphia, who sent back a letter of thanks.<sup>7</sup> In fact, the British general's inactivity had rendered the whole situation so farcical in the eyes of every one, that an absurd tradition grew up, and is still sometimes repeated in Philadelphia, that Washington used to go into the city in disguise and spend a friendly evening with General Howe over a game of cards.

There had been much unfavorable comment on Washington during the autumn and the more his series of defeats at Brandywine, the Schuylkill crossing and Germantown, together with the loss of Mifflin and Red Bank and the deplor-

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<sup>7</sup> Pontgibaud, "A French Volunteer of the War of Independence," p. 47. This dog, evidently of patriotic instincts, had previously strayed into Washington's camp a few days after the Battle of Germantown. (Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. vi, p. 98 note.)

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

able destitution of his army were contrasted with the brilliant success of Gates at Saratoga, the more certain people were inclined to hint that the commander-in-chief was not equal to the situation. Even John Adams began to lose confidence in him. Samuel Adams was strongly opposed to him and with Mifflin, Richard Henry Lee, Dr. Rush, and other members of the Congress, were laying plans to supersede him.

We must not be too hasty in condemning these patriots. Time has shown that their uneasiness was unnecessary and mistaken. But placed as they were in a position to see all the failures of the autumn of 1777 and all the misery of the Valley Forge winter, with the army reduced to the vanishing point, and apparently nothing but the inactivity of Howe preventing total extinction, it was not unnatural that they should have misgivings, and that they should feel that the great success of Gates in the North would be an empty and useless victory if everything went to pieces in the South.

Filled with this thought they dropped hints and suggestions in conversation and circulated an anonymous paper called "Thoughts of a Freeman," which was a formal attack not only on Washington's ability as an officer, but on his popularity, which, it was said, was misleading the people and keeping an incompetent man in command.

"The people of America have been guilty of idolatry by making a man their God, and the God of heaven and earth will convince them by a woful experience, that he is only a man; for no good can be expected from the standing army until Baal and his worshippers are banished from camp." (Sparks, Writings of Washington, vol. v, p. 497.)

The cautious methods by which they felt public sentiment to see if it could be changed, show the great confidence the majority of the patriot party had in Washington in spite of the failures of 1777. Whether this confidence was really deep rooted, or a mere passing sentiment, was the question that Mifflin, Rush, Lee and their party undertook to investigate during the Valley Forge winter. This party in the

## CABAL AGAINST WASHINGTON

Congress that was opposed to Washington was the same one which was suspicious of the intention of France and believed that she would seize some of our territory or turn us into French colonists.

Gates had readily accepted their suggestions and stood ready to take the commandship-in-chief as soon as the movement in his favor became sufficiently strong. He had for some time been criticising in a sharp, overshrewd way the decisions and plans of Washington, and he did this even in letters addressed to Washington himself. He was an Englishman, had served in the British army, and settled in Virginia. Though impressive and useful in politics and a good organizer of military affairs, he was an inferior field officer, and of such a narrow, jealous, intriguing mind, that he could never have balanced and united factions and dealt broadly and fairly with all sorts of characters and conditions as Washington was obliged to do every day in order to keep together his army and the cause.

An Irish officer named Conway, who had spent a large part of his life in the French service, turned in to assist the rise of Gates, but did him more harm than good. "Heaven," he wrote to Gates, "has been determined to save your country, or a weak General and bad counsellors would have ruined it." This phrase incautiously shown by Gates, became known to Washington's friends. They communicated it to Washington, who merely let Conway know he had seen it; and both Gates and Conway were thrown into much confusion, while Washington's numerous friends among the officers of the army rallied to his support.

Mifflin and Rush would probably have conducted the movement in a cautious way as far as it was capable of going and then abandoned it. But Conway, with a combination of Irish and French excitability, bustled about in it so much and shrugged his shoulders so often, that he gave it his own name, the Conway Cabal, and ruined it. Washington had taken the ground that if there was a strong public or majority disapproval of his conduct, he would gladly resign his exhaust-

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

ing duties and retire to private life; but he would not resign at the request of a mere faction.

There is a tradition that at one time the cabal was so strong in the Congress, that they were on the point of offering a motion to send a committee to arrest Washington in his camp and forcibly remove him from command. But the motion was abandoned because of the arrival of Gouverneur Morris, who would have made a bare majority against it. Outside of the Congress there was soon no question about public opinion in the patriot party; and as winter passed into spring, the Conway Cabal became of less and less importance, and after the news of the French alliance it was heard of no more.<sup>8</sup>

Some officers, notably the foreign ones, were quite severe in their criticisms on Washington for wintering in such a desolate place as Valley Forge, where scarcely any provisions could be obtained. Howe obtained most of his supplies by his ships, which was the usual method of the British throughout the war. He also received considerable supplies from the numerous loyalists of Pennsylvania, who hauled to Philadelphia and sold for hard money the farm produce which should have gone to Washington's camp. On market days the British appear to have sent out large detachments of over two thousand troops, which proceeded eight or ten miles out on the roads leading to the town, to protect the loyalist market wagons from patriot raids.<sup>9</sup>

In February, much against his will, Washington sent out General Greene to seize supplies from the people throughout the region now covered by Delaware and Chester counties. It must be done or the army would disband. Washington was always reluctant to make seizures of this kind, because the

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<sup>8</sup> Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iii, pp. 44, 54; G. W. Greene, "Life of General Greene," vol. ii, pp. 1-40; Durand, "New Materials for History of American Revolution," pp. 22, 23, 173, 191-194, 234, 235, 240, 241; Johnson, "Life of Greene," vol. i, pp. 154, 166.

<sup>9</sup> W. B. Reed, "Life of Joseph Reed," vol. i, p. 380.

## LACEY AND McLANE

patriot party was very suspicious and jealous of any extreme exercise of military power which might seem inconsistent with the doctrines of liberty and the rights of man. But Greene hardened his heart and executed his disagreeable duty rigorously. He could collect very little; for nearly all the produce of the country, the horses, cattle, swine and sheep had been sent by the loyalists to Philadelphia.

The patriots, however, got a small share of this produce by capturing some of the loyalist wagons on their way to Howe. There was a patriot force organized for this purpose and scouting between the Delaware and Schuylkill rivers under the command of Allan McLane, a rough-rider and free-booter of the most gallant type, and there was a similar force under General Lacey. McLane made dashes up to the gates of the redoubts which stretched from river to river along the line of Green and Poplar streets. Judging from Lacey's letters and reports, nearly the whole population near Philadelphia was loyalist. He could obtain no assistance, no information from them, not even the direction of the roads. As soon as he approached they would mount their horses concealed in by-places, and taking their way through the fields and private paths, tell the British in the city that the rebels were in the neighborhood.<sup>10</sup>

Washington said that "the greater part of the inhabitants of Pennsylvania" were loyalists, and that the British had their emissaries in every part of the country working up the loyal interest. It is highly probable that the growth of loyalism was everywhere greatly encouraged by these secret emissaries. Great quantities of printed copies of spurious letters and documents, purporting to be written by Washington or adopted by the Congress, were circulated by the British. They were most cunningly contrived to throw doubt on the patriot cause and influence the minds of the hesitating class. This would seem to be in entire accord with Howe's plans of

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<sup>10</sup> Niles, "Principles and Acts of the Revolution," edition 1870, pp. 227-228.



## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

bringing about a compromise with as little use of the military power as possible, and may help us to understand the surprisingly large numbers of the loyalists in certain places. The starvation of the army at Valley Forge and the small number of Pennsylvania militia in the field were quite obviously the result of loyalism in Pennsylvania.<sup>11</sup>

Part of Howe's plan in taking his army to Philadelphia had been to increase loyalism in that region; and in this respect his expedition had undoubtedly succeeded. It always seemed as if the colonies might be retained by increasing and encouraging the loyalists until they became so powerful that they would take possession, one by one, of all the state governments and hold them within the British empire. But the loyalist party, though considerable in numbers, was so largely composed of hesitators, neutrals and indifferents that it was altogether lacking in aggressiveness.

The troops of McLane and Lacey who seized provisions intended for the British, were known as market stoppers. They were very apt to be captured in their daring work, and were then paraded by the British through the streets, with vegetables strung around their necks and market-baskets on their arms, before being jailed or publicly whipped and turned adrift. In retaliation, the patriots would often whip loyalist marketmen, brand them in the hand with the British army letters G. R., and send them into the British lines.<sup>12</sup>

The cruel treatment which the British inflicted on their prisoners in Philadelphia was one of the stock horrors of the Revolution, like the suffering at Libby and Andersonville in

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<sup>11</sup> Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. vi, pp. 118, 119, 150, 191, 288 note, 450, 451, 474 note, 493.

<sup>12</sup> Sargent, "Life of André," pp. 143, 144, 150; Cobbett, "Parliamentary History," vol. xx, p. 346; Parliamentary Register, House of Commons, 1779, vol. xiii, pp. 430, 431, 435, 436; G. W. Greene, "Life of Nathanael Greene," vol. i, p. 557; Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iii, pp. 52-55; Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. vi, pp. 249, 295, 367, 368; *Historical Magazine*, vol. v, p. 132; Jones, "New York in the Revolution," vol. i, p. 716.



## SUFFERING OF PRISONERS

the Civil War of 1861. Among the starving prisoners in Philadelphia rats were a luxury. Dr. Waldo said, that some of the prisoners, in their last agonies of hunger, scraped mortar and rotten wood from the walls and greedily ate it for the temporary sensation of nourishment which it gave. Such scenes of cruelty in the midst of the extravagance, luxury and gaiety which the loyalists and British officers enjoyed that winter, very naturally stimulated the hatred of the patriots for everything English, and inspired them with more desperate determination in the contest.

The condition of the prisoners was the result of the system by which army officials were permitted to make fortunes. The Philadelphia commissary of prisoners possibly made a fortune; for the New York commissary, the husband of General Howe's mistress, is reported to have amassed great wealth out of treatment which produced a still longer list of atrocities.

The worst prisons in New York were the ships moored out in the harbor, floating hells, where the living and dead lay together in the stifling holds, and the first word of the guard, in the morning was "Rebels, turn out your dead." The corpses were buried on the beach and when washed out by storms floated for days in the hot sun beneath the port-holes of the ships.<sup>13</sup>

"The inhuman treatment our prisoners met with while in New York is beyond all description. Humanity cannot but drop a tear at sight of the poor, miserable, starved objects. They are mere skeletons, unable to creep or speak in many instances. One vessel lost 27 in her passage from New York to Medford, and 7 died the night they were put ashore; and they are dying all along the roads. Most who have got home in the neighboring towns, are taken with the small pox, which undoubtedly was given them by design. All this does not seem to discourage the few surviving ones. They pray that God would only give them health and strength again, and they are determined to have sweet revenge."

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<sup>13</sup> Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. v, pp. 166, 170, 424, 431; Bolton, "Private Soldier under Washington," p. 187; Stiffel, "Records of the Revolution;" Onderdonk, "Incidents," p. 207.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

"Complaints of the usage of the prisoners both in the land and sea service have been the subject of many of my letters to Lord and General Howe, but all the satisfaction or answer that I could ever obtain was that the reports were groundless. However, upon the authority of Capt. Gamble's relation, and the miserable, emaciated countenances of these poor creatures who have lately been released, I shall take the liberty of remonstrating sharply with his Lordship and the General, and let them know in very plain terms, that if their rule of conduct towards our prisoners is not altered, we shall be obliged, however disagreeable it may be, to make retaliation." (Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. v, p. 170 note.)

The Americans who were taken to prisons in England had also their tales of horror; but mitigated to a great extent by philanthropic efforts of the English Whigs, who raised subscriptions of over £3815 to provide clothes and food; and David Hartley and the Rev. Thomas Wren paid regular visits to the prisons. Franklin also raised money for them in France. And the most remarkable contrast to the prisons in Philadelphia and New York was the conduct of General Carleton in Canada, who in all his campaigns was so kind and humane to prisoners, and discharged them so soon on parole, with new clothes and presents of wine and food, that these men on their return were kept away from the starving and ragged patriotic forces, whose devotion to the cause might, it was feared, be weakened by the relation of Carleton's kindness.<sup>14</sup>

So many prisoners were reduced to living skeletons in Philadelphia and New York, that great difficulty was experienced all through the Revolution in arranging any exchange of prisoners. As a rule only officers could be exchanged. If private was exchanged for private it was all in favor of the British, for the emaciated American soon died, often on his way home, and in any event had not health enough left to go to war again. But the healthy and well-fed Englishman could go back to his regiment or at the worst

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<sup>14</sup> Bolton, "Private Soldier under Washington," p. 186; Lee, *Memoirs*, vol. ii, p. 368.

## DIFFICULTY OF EXCHANGE

relieve in some British possession a strong soldier who could be sent to America.

Washington attempted to refuse to exchange man for man when his own man was little better than a corpse; but he was not successful in settling a definite basis, and the whole subject became involved in endless dispute and negotiation. The British took more of us prisoner than we took of them, and it is possible that the system of starvation and cruelty becoming of such manifest advantage, was tacitly encouraged. The Congress, too, was slow to urge any exchange which was of such enormous advantage to the enemy. Many prisoners, especially among the privateersmen, seeing no prospects of relief and feeling that the Congress had forgotten them, entered the enemy's service; and thousands of other Americans served their country only by remaining unexchanged for years until death relieved their misery.<sup>15</sup>

During the last three years of the war under Clinton the British were apparently much more humane in their treatment of prisoners. There is very little evidence of American cruelty to prisoners, except in the case of imprisoned loyalists, who often endured much suffering, and some letters on the subject will be found scattered through the volumes of the *American Archives*. In New York many loyalists were imprisoned under the Court House at Kingston, in which the patriot Provincial convention held its sessions. These prisoners were kept in such a state of crowding and filth, that the stench rose up into the room of the convention; and a curious resolution was passed on motion of Gouverneur Morris, describing the "nauseous and disagreeable effluvia" in which

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<sup>15</sup> Bolton, "Private Soldier under Washington," pp. 191, 192; Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. vi, pp. 215, 226, 243, 461 note, 472; vol. 8, pp. 54, 339, 360, 361; vol. 9, pp. 423, 445, and title "Prisoners" in index; Gordon, "American Revolution," edition (London) 1788, vol. iii, p. 492; Boudinot's Journal, pp. 9-10, 43, 44, 56-59; J. J. Boudinot, "Life of Boudinot," vol. i, pp. 76, 81-88, 90-98, 102-104, 160; Winsor, "Handbook of the Revolution," p. 200.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

the members were compelled to sit, and allowing them to smoke "for the preservation of their health."<sup>16</sup>

A shocking condition of dirt and disease was, however, common to all prisons at that time; for the cleanliness and order of modern prisons, started by the Quakers, had not gathered much headway. The crowding of the jail at Kingston at last became so intolerable to the convention, in spite of the smoking privilege, that many of the loyalists were removed and confined in the prison ships at Esopus on the Hudson. When Clinton took the Hudson Highlands on his way to assist Burgoyne, these prison ships were run up Esopus Creek and burnt, and Judge Jones says that one hundred and fifty of the loyalists were burnt in them. But this burning of the loyalists lacks confirmation from other sources, and is believed to be without foundation.

The officers at Valley Forge, of course, fared better than the men; and in spring there was some relief to the suffering. There was so little apprehension from the British that Washington's wife and the wives of the other officers arrived to live with their husbands as at Morristown in the previous winter. Officers and wives, with the numerous French and foreign officers, formed an agreeable society in the long winter evenings; and we learn that there was a pleasant side to the life at Valley Forge. It certainly had its humorous side, when an officer, covered with a sort of dressing-gown made of an old blanket or faded bed quilt, paraded his half-naked men with their rusty firelocks.

In spite of the famine and destitution Washington was making the most strenuous exertion to discipline his ragged men and teach them more thoroughly the art of war. To save them from future attacks of the smallpox he had actually, in that terrible winter and in their naked condition, had them all inoculated with the disease after the manner of the

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<sup>16</sup> Jones, "New York in the Revolution," vol. i, pp. 220, 705-710. See also Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. v, p. 426.

## STEUBEN ARRIVES

time; and Harry Lee describes the result as successful and beneficial.<sup>17</sup>

On the 23rd of February, Baron Steuben, an officer who had served with Frederick the Great, arrived and was received with the greatest distinction and rejoicing. He immediately began to drill the troops in the manual of arms and the ordinary evolutions which are now considered necessary in every village militia company. The patriot army had been fighting for three years without any of this discipline. They could not wheel to right or left, form into column or do the simplest thing in a soldierlike way. They moved about and obeyed orders like volunteer Indian fighters on the frontier or a sheriff's posse of farmers. Their merit as an army consisted in their belief in the cause and the intelligent interest which each man willingly gave to the business of fighting. They were ridiculous when they attempted to handle a musket on parade; but when they raised it to their eye and pressed the trigger there was a different story to tell.

Strange to say, there seems to have been no one in the country who was able or willing to teach this ordinary drill manual until Steuben arrived. It has sometimes been assumed that he came out to us as an ardent lover of liberty, like Lafayette. But he had no particular interest in our cause and came out somewhat against his will. He was not a man of any broad military ability, and his rank in Europe was only that of colonel. But he was known to have acquired very exact knowledge of detail and organization in his service under Frederick the Great; and for this reason the French Government sent him out to America to give Washington's army what it was believed to stand in greatest need of.

The French Court had begun their secret negotiations with Steuben in the spring of 1777. Their desire to secure his services, and their persistence in persuading him when he at first refused, show not only their extreme willingness to help

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<sup>17</sup> G. W. Greene, "Life of Nathanael Greene," vol. i, p. 571; Kapp, "Life of Steuben," p. 118; Lee, *Memoirs*, vol. i, p. 48.



## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

the Americans long before the surrender of Burgoyne, but also their accurate knowledge of the conditions which prevailed in our army. The greatest pains were taken to make Steuben's mission successful. He was to go out with the appearance of an enthusiastic volunteer like Lafayette and make no arrogant demands for pay and rank. His real character as a representative of the French government must be concealed; for France was as yet at peace with England, and could not openly assist the Americans.

The great difficulty was how the Congress, which was not in the secret, could be persuaded to give this simple volunteer such a rank as would enable him to influence the organization of the army. His European rank of colonel would be very unimpressive in America where colonels were more numerous than blacksmiths and doctors. But French diplomacy came to the rescue and he was declared to be a lieutenant-general of the Margraviate of Baden, which was very magnificent, and the Congress immediately made him an inspector-general.

He proved to be an accomplished man of the world, genial, sensible and not ashamed to descend to the most minute details. He took the musket in his hands to show its use and performed all the duties of a drill sergeant. He formed the officers into squads and drilled them so that they could teach the men. Humorous stories were told of his struggles with the English language, and at first most of his orders, as well as his witticisms and gallantries with the ladies had to be translated for him by a clever young Frenchman who afterwards became a prominent lawyer of Philadelphia, Peter S. Duponceau.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Kapp's "Life of Steuben," pp. 67, 74; Gordon, "American Revolution," *supra*, vol. iii, pp. 67, 68. See also Pontigbaud, "A French Volunteer in the War of Independence," pp. 70, 195, 126, 202; Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. vi, p. 386 note, 505 note, 507.



## LXVI.

### THE MISCHIANZA

ON the 6th of May Washington made to the army the formal announcement of the French alliance, and the whole day was given up to rejoicing. The tattered troops paraded and displayed their newly acquired efficiency in drill. There were salvos of artillery, running fire of musketry and at intervals all the troops shouted "Long live the King of France," "Long live the Friendly European Powers," and finally after a great outburst of artillery and musketry, they shouted "The American States."

"The army made a most brilliant appearance; after which his excellency dined in public with all the officers, attended with a band of music. I never was present where there was such unfeigned and perfect joy as was discovered in every countenance. The entertainment was concluded with a number of patriotic toasts attended with huzzas. When the General took his leave there was a universal clap with loud huzzas, which continued till he had proceeded a quarter of a mile, during which time there were a thousand hats tossed in the air. His Excellency turned round with his retinue and huzzared several times." (Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. vii, p. 4.)

The British in Philadelphia had in their turn a great event to celebrate in the retirement of General Howe, whose resignation had been accepted, and they gave him a magnificent farewell entertainment. In London many seem to have believed that he would not come home until he had attempted some bold stroke to retrieve his credit; or perhaps he would negotiate some sort of accommodation or compromise with the patriots.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "Diary and Letters of Thomas Hutchinson," vol. i, p. 201. Germain wrote to Howe February 4, 1778, that the King had accepted his resignation, and this letter was received by Howe in Philadelphia on the 9th of April. (Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. vi, p. 494 and note.)

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

But these people did not understand the General. There was nothing now to keep him in America. His work was done. He could do no more either for the Whigs or for the Americans, and he might as well return to his place in Parliament and at Almacks. London was more interesting than the colonies, even when assisted by Mrs. Loring. If the charge is true that he had purposely allowed the rebellion to develop, he could now laugh at the Tory Ministry; and his voluntary retirement was an open Whig declaration to all Europe that the attempt of the Government to establish its sovereignty in the colonies would not only fail, but had already failed.

His career and the gaiety of his sojourn in Philadelphia reached their climax in May, when some of the officers subscribed among themselves to give a magnificent fête and tournament for the amusement of the loyalist ladies and in honor of the general who was about to return to England. It was called the *Mischianza*, or *Medley*, and was an imitation of one given at Lord Derby's country-seat in England four years before, for which General Burgoyne had written his play, "*The Maid of the Oaks*." It was too bad the poor fellow could not be in Philadelphia to help at this one. But the taste and versatile accomplishments of Major André were amply sufficient. We understand André's character better when we remember that both his parents were French.

The town was ransacked for blue, gold, and scarlet cloth and every article of finery that could be found. André, with the officers and the ladies, was busy in designing extravagant costumes, and in decorating the house at the Wharton country place on the southern outskirts of the town. Wooden buildings and review stands were added to the house, and the grounds arranged for the tournament.

The great ball-room was pale blue and rose pink, panelled with a small gold bead, and gorgeous with festoons of flowers; and these decorations were heightened with eighty-five great mirrors decked with rose-pink silk, ribbons and artificial flowers. The supper-room was two hundred and ten feet long by forty feet wide and twenty-two feet high, decorated in a

## THE MISCHIANZA

similar way, and with fifty-six large pier glasses and hundreds of branches, lights, lustres, and tapers. Besides all this, there were drawing-rooms, card-rooms, and alcoves; and, most interesting of all, André himself was there, so glib in technical terms and the name for every shade of ribbon or hanging.

André designed the invitation card. It was a shield with General Howe's crest and a view of the ocean and the setting sun. Any unfavorable implication in the setting sun was saved by a Latin motto to the effect that the sun was setting only to rise in greater splendor.<sup>2</sup>

On the afternoon of the 18th of May the fête began with a grand regatta, which started on the river just where the line of redoubts touched the water-side. There were galleys, barges, and boats of all sorts covered with streamers and pennants, filled with ladies and officers, accompanied by all the bands and music of the army and surrounding the great central "Huzzar" galley, with General Howe and the admiral on board. Barges kept the swarms of spectators' boats from pressing on the procession. The transports, gayly decorated and crowded with spectators, were placed in a line the whole length of the town's water-front. The men-of-war anchored in line out in the stream, manned their yards, and covered their rigging with the flags of all nations, among which could be seen the patriot stars and stripes. The broadsides thundered salutes, and great clouds of white smoke rolled along the tide, while the procession of galleys, heaped up with the most brilliant colored costumes, passed along. There had never been such a scene upon the Delaware.

The procession passed down the river to the southern end of the town opposite to the Wharton villa, and there, while the cannonading still continued, they landed on the pretty gravel beach and made another procession between lines of

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<sup>2</sup> A British writer of that time suggested that Howe be raised to the peerage under the title Baron Delay Warr. Jones, "New York in the Revolution," vol. i, p. 107.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE .

grenadiers and cavalry up through the lawn of the old country place to the pavilions. The trumpets sounded, the bands played again, and the mock tournament began on horses most richly caparisoned, ridden by knights and esquires, in white and red silk, with banners, pennants, and mottoes. The eye was dazzled by the gorgeous display of gold and blue and scarlet; and the lavishness of outlay and extravagance would have fed and clothed the patriots for the rest of the war.

There were ladies in gorgeous Turkish costumes with wondrous high turbans. Blue-jackets from the ships stood in picturesque attitudes with drawn cutlasses. There were lines of jet-black slaves in Oriental costumes, with big silver collars round their necks and silver bracelets on their naked arms, who bent their heads to the ground as the general and the admiral, the mighty conquerors of all America, passed by.

The trumpets were flourishing, the knights were shivering their spears and clattering their swords in what seemed a terrible conflict for the favor of the ladies, and everywhere could be seen their extraordinary and infinitely silly mottoes about love and glory. Heralds in black and orange dashed here and there on their horses and there were proclamations that the knights of the Burning Mountain would contend, not by words, but by deeds, and prove that the ladies of the Burning Mountain excelled in virtue and beauty all others in the universe. And at last all the ladies, by their heralds, stopped the supposed horrible carnage and declared themselves satisfied.

But why should we tell how, when the tournament was over, they crowded about in the old country place, among triumphal arches, columns in the Tuscan order, imitation Sienna marble, boom-shells, and flaming hearts, and as night came on divided themselves among the faro-tables, the supper-room, and the dancing-hall?

At ten they had fireworks, beginning with "a magnificent bouquet of rockets," as André described it. The triumphal arches were illuminated with streaming rockets, bursting balloons, and transparencies. The shells and flaming

## THE FEU D'ARTIFICE

hearts sent forth Chinese fountains. It was a most wonderful *feu d'artifice*, as André kept explaining; and why an army that had brought such a supply of fireworks with them had failed to put down the little rebellion was the mystery which he did not explain. The chief engineer had charge of the *feu d'artifice*, and his resources seemed to be boundless. At the end, Fame appeared at the top of all the arches, spangled with stars, and blowing from her trumpet to Conqueror Howe, in letters of light, the legend, "Thy laurels shall never fade," followed by a great *fauteur* of rockets as a punctuation mark to the legend.

Then they all hurried back to the card-rooms, the supper-rooms, and the dancing-hall, and gambled, ate, and danced till morning, while all the bands of the army were playing and the wine was flowing to celebrate the most wonderful general that ever fought a war, and who had already accomplished a more extraordinary feat of arms than the world had ever known.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>The Mischianza was described in full detail in a letter by André to a friend in England, which has been several times reprinted, and can be found in Jones's "New York in the Revolution," vol. i, pp. 242-252, 716.



## LXVII.

### LAFAYETTE'S NARROW ESCAPE AT BARREN HILL

THE day after the Mischianza the British came within an ace of making some of its boasting real; for in a moment of incaution Washington had placed 2500 picked men, the flower of his army, in a position where the lion's jaws could close upon them.

He had put Lafayette in command of these men and instructed him to approach the enemy's lines, cover the country between the Delaware and the Schuylkill, interrupt communication with Philadelphia and obtain intelligence of the designs of the British, as it was probable that they were preparing to evacuate the town. The obtaining intelligence of their designs was, according to his written instructions, the most important part of Lafayette's duties and he was directed to employ trusty and intelligent spies.

Washington was aware that he was sending his favorite young Frenchman on a very dangerous business. He reminded him that his detachment was a very valuable one and that its loss would be a severe blow to the army. He must take every precaution to guard against surprise.

In fact, the danger was evidently so great that it is at first difficult to understand why Washington was willing to risk twenty-five hundred of his best troops for the sake of gaining a doubtful or very small advantage. It was a violation of his well-known rule against isolated detachments, which he was usually very strenuous in upholding<sup>1</sup>; and when we read carefully the instructions to Lafayette a suspicion at

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<sup>1</sup> "A superior army," he said, "may fall a victim to an inferior army by an injudicious division." (Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. v, p. 281; vol. ii, p. 257.)

## LAFAYETTE AT BARREN HILL

once arises that there may have been some other reasons for sending him beside those which are avowed. Why should such a risk be taken merely to obtain information and employ spies? Washington could send spies from Valley Forge and had already done so and received information by them. He already had troops between the Delaware and the Schuylkill, who, being rough riders, and acting in small bands, could obtain information and watch movements of the British much better than Lafayette's large detachment. Lafayette was told that he was to consider himself in command of these rough riders already on the ground and investigate some complaints that had been made against them for disorderly conduct. But this, like the others, seems a very slight and unnecessary duty on which to risk 2500 men.<sup>2</sup>

Pontgibaud, who accompanied the expedition, says that it was sent partly from policy and partly to give Lafayette a chance to distinguish himself. In the previous autumn Washington had written the Congress that he was in a delicate situation with regard to Lafayette, who was constantly pressing for a command. He did not want to give it to him, and yet at the same time he realized that the young man, through his important connections in France, and his cheerful encouraging letters to his friends at home, was doing a world of good to the patriot cause. It might be advisable to gratify his wishes; and very likely this is the whole explanation of the Barren Hill affair which came so near being a terrible disaster.<sup>3</sup>

So the young Frenchman with his 2500 picked men marched down the Schuylkill on the 18th of May, crossed it and took a position on Barren Hill, some ten or twelve miles from Philadelphia, with his right wing extending to some rocks on the river, and his left resting on some stone houses

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<sup>2</sup> Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. vii, pp. 15, 20, 21, 24.

<sup>3</sup> Pontgibaud, "A French Volunteer in the War of Independence," p. 53; Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. vi, pp. 161, 224.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

and a wood. To this precaution of remaining near the river, Lafayette added videttes and patrols on the roads to keep a careful watch. This was his first important command, and he showed the same good sense and careful judgment which he always displayed in our service. He had no opportunity for brilliant aggressiveness and was possibly not a brilliant soldier. But at Barren Hill, as afterwards, in Virginia, he was alert, watchful and prompt.

The warlike spirit of Britain which had slumbered all winter in Philadelphia appears to have been aroused at last by the mock fight of the Mischianza, and the very next day General Grant with seven thousand men started to catch the little French Marquis. It would have been so neat to have taken him to England in a ship when they evacuated the city. They felt so sure of him that preparations, it is said, were made, to have him at a grand dinner the next evening in the city and a frigate was prepared to take him a prisoner to England.

Although Howe and one or two of his officers testified before Parliament, that they never could learn anything about the movements of the enemy, they appear to have known all about Lafayette on Barren Hill within a few hours after he reached it; and Pontgibaud says that British spies were among the patriot troops.

General Grant appears to have started from Philadelphia in the afternoon or evening of the 19th of May, and making a long detour to the eastward by Frankford crossed over to Whitemarsh during the night and just before daybreak came down along the Schuylkill to strike the Marquis in the rear, while another force under Clinton and Howe coming direct from Philadelphia was to attack him in front. The Marquis had six hundred militia stationed on the Whitemarsh road; but they abandoned their post so that Grant had approached very close to Barren Hill just before daybreak, and the trap was almost complete.

Pontgibaud was lying on the ground when a surgeon came

## A LUCKY ESCAPE

and told him of the approach of the British and also of a ford he had discovered close by which would give a chance of immediate retreat across the river. The existence of this crossing, Matson's Ford, had not been known, Pontgibaud says, to any of them until the surgeon accidentally discovered it in exploring the neighborhood.

Lafayette, who was talking with a young woman whom he intended to send as a spy to Philadelphia, was aroused by the conversation with the surgeon, came to inquire into it, and when told the whole story, immediately began an investigation. He found a column near his left which was presumably the force under Clinton and Howe, which was to attack his front. He had scarcely changed his formation to meet this danger when he found himself cut off in the rear by Grant's force, and his men began to cry that they were surrounded. Assuming a smiling countenance, to encourage his troops, he instantly began a retreat to the ford.

Grant was nearer to it; but surprised at the sudden appearance of Lafayette's force, he spent so much time in reconnoitring it, and was so deceived by the appearance of numbers which the Frenchman cleverly assumed by presenting to him false heads of columns among the trees, that the whole patriot force, favored no doubt by the darkness, was across the river before the British reached the ford.<sup>1</sup>

It was a narrow and lucky escape. If Grant had known of the ford and had seized it or accidentally placed himself between it and Lafayette, he would have enabled Howe and Clinton, who were approaching, from Philadelphia, to cut to pieces the whole patriot detachment.

Washington learning of the danger had ordered all the

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<sup>1</sup> Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iii, p. 90; "Memoirs and Correspondence of Lafayette," London edition of 1837, vol. i, pp. 46-48; Pontgibaud, "A French Volunteer in the War of Independence," p. 53; Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. vii, p. 31.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

heavy artillery at Valley Forge to be fired to arouse apprehensions in the British of a general movement of the whole American army. The quick retreat of the Marquis was credited to the improved discipline under the teaching of Steuben. But Washington was careful to risk no more valuable detachments to watch for the evacuation of Philadelphia. He kept entirely away from the city and allowed the British to move out at their leisure.



## LXVIII.

### GENERAL HOWE RETURNS TO ENGLAND, AND HIS CONDUCT OF THE WAR IS INVESTIGATED

WHEN it was known in Philadelphia in May, 1778, that the city was to be evacuated, and, as rumor had it, the war abandoned, a number of loyalists, who as magistrates and other civil officers had been assisting Howe to govern the city, were not unnaturally alarmed. If they should remain after the evacuation and fall into the hands of the patriots their fate might be a sorrowful one. They accordingly waited upon Howe, asked for his advice and asked also if the war was really to be abandoned. Howe gave them, it is said, no positive answer; but advised them to apply for a flag, go to Washington and endeavor through his means to make their peace with the Congress.<sup>1</sup>

This was certainly very extraordinary, that a British general on his retirement should advise his own officials to go over to the enemy and make the best arrangements they could. The loyalists believed it to be another proof of Howe's secret Whig purpose of letting the rebellion succeed and of his conviction that it had already succeeded and that the war would soon be ended.

Galloway and his friends, shocked and surprised, immediately repaired to General Clinton who was to be Howe's successor; and Clinton too was surprised when told what Howe had said. He assured Galloway that the war was not to be abandoned; but continued with the utmost vigor, and that his Majesty's loyal subjects were not expected to go over to the enemy.

General Howe remained in Philadelphia until it was

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<sup>1</sup> Galloway, "Examination Before House of Commons," p. 36; Jones, "New York in the Revolution," vol. i, pp. 239, 240.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

evacuated on the 18th of June, when he returned to England with part of the fleet, while his brother, the Admiral, with the rest of the fleet, went to New York, and remained on the coast until October. Galloway and most of the loyalists very wisely decided to go to England with General Howe and some three thousand of them are said to have accompanied him. They were best away; for the lives of many of them would have been in danger if they remained, and few, if any, of them would have become real Americans.<sup>2</sup>

General Howe returned, Walpole said, "richer in money than in laurels;" and another London wit remarked that he had no bays except those which drew his coach. But, with that supreme indifference which always characterized him, he seems to have been entirely satisfied with what he had accomplished. He assumed, it is said, a more luxurious style of living. Some said that he had made a great deal of money by his command; others that he had made very little.<sup>3</sup>

When he resumed his seat in Parliament the Tories and the Ministry were scarcely willing to assail him for having been too easy with the patriots, because, as cousin of the King and from other circumstances of character and long service in war and politics, his position was a strong one and his influence powerful. His motives were suspected and a large part of the public thought they saw numerous instances of his ulterior purpose in carrying on the war; but the actual proof of such motives would be difficult to obtain and the formal attempt to prove them would raise an unpleasant scandal. Moreover, he had been the Ministry's own appointed general, specially commissioned to carry out the sword and olive-branch policy. Having trusted to his discretion to carry out their sword and olive-branch policy, it would be rather awkward for them to assail him for having waved the olive-branch to excess. In condemning him they would merely be proving their own mistake and playing into the hands of the Whigs.

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<sup>2</sup> W. B. Reed, "Life of Joseph Reed," vol. i, p. 379.

<sup>3</sup> "Diary and Letters of Thomas Hutchinson," vol. ii, p. 336.

## HOWE'S TRIAL.

Their disgust and their desire to punish him were ill-concealed. Attacks upon him appeared in print in all sorts of forms, and he finally asked for a committee of inquiry in Parliament. The Ministry resisted this inquiry, knowing that it was intended as a covert attack upon themselves, and would be used to assist the Whigs, who indeed appear to have been more anxious than Howe to have the investigation begun.

"Last night the House of Commons resolved to go into an enquiry upon Howe's motion. Lord North spoke against it, but there was no division. This affair causes a great jumble. I think it probable Howe himself, who made the motion, was content it should rest, but Charles Fox, hoping to bring Lord George into trouble, would not suffer it. On the other hand, Mr. Rigby and some others expect to set Howe in a bad light, and fell off from Lord North; or possibly Lord North himself did not care much if an enquiry should be made, provided it does not come from him." ("Diary and Letters of Thomas Hutchinson," vol. ii, p. 256.)

The inquiry began on the 3rd of May, 1779, before the House of Commons, sitting as Committee of the Whole; and as we have seen in a previous chapter, included an investigation into the conduct of Burgoyne. Howe, with the assistance of two of his witnesses, Cornwallis and No-Flint Grey, who stood by him manfully, certainly succeeded to a considerable degree in turning the proceeding to the support of his own party and their rallying cry that the American war was impracticable.<sup>4</sup>

Cornwallis began his testimony by expressing the highest admiration for the military capacity and genius of his friend. He then described America, in a most amusing way, as a country of ambuscades at every few yards. It was impossible, he said, to learn the nature of the ground, either from the inhab-

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<sup>4</sup> Cobbett, "*Parliamentary History*," vol. xx, pp. 707, 716, 722, 803. The testimony and all the debates connected with the inquiry are given in the *Parliamentary Register*, House of Commons, 1779, vols. xi and xiii. A shorter version of the testimony, with the attacks upon Howe, which led to the inquiry, was published under the title, "*A View of the Evidence Relative to the Conduct of the War under Sir W. Howe*," etc.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

itants or by reconnoitring, and it was also impossible to obtain provisions from the country.

On the question of the failure to assist Burgoyne he was brief, vague and evasive; and refused to give an opinion on any of the military movements. On the vital point of Howe's reasons for all his movements he declined to answer questions, because, having been Howe's confidential officer, it would, he said, be improper for him to reveal to Parliament what he had learned in that capacity.

When the dashing prisoner-killer, No-Flint Grey, was called he also described America as a horrible network of ambuscades. He had not the slightest hesitation in giving his opinion on any subject. He defended the failure to assist Burgoyne, and spent considerable time in showing that it was utterly impossible for the largest force Howe might have had to pass from New York up to Albany. He impaired the value of his testimony by being too willing a witness and making sweeping assertions. He said that there were scarcely any loyalists in America, and that the people were practically unanimous in favor of the rebellion. When asked about Valley Forge, he said that the rebels were in such large force there that it was impossible to attack them.

This testimony of Cornwallis and Grey tended so strongly to prove the Whig position that the war was impracticable that the Ministry were much alarmed and wanted to stop the whole proceeding.

"Upon Ld Cornwallis and General Grey giving their opinion that the reduction of America was impracticable a Cabinet Council was called yesterday, and it was moved to let the inquiry before the House rest where it is." ("Diary and Letters of Thomas Hutchinson," vol. ii, p. 257.)

But the Ministry finally decided to go on. Witnesses were called to contradict what Cornwallis and Grey had said; and General Robertson and Joseph Galloway proved to be very useful for this purpose. General Robertson was an old Scotchman who had risen from the ranks, had served in the French War, and was very familiar with the colonies. He had been one of Howe's subordinates, and was military governor of

## THE TESTIMONY CUT SHORT

New York, in which office he gained a very unsavory reputation for having made money by the irregular and fraudulent practices which were so common.<sup>5</sup> His testimony, as well as that of Galloway, was, however, very clear and intelligent. They described the country very much as we know it, denied the ambushes, said it was easy enough to reconnoitre, that there was no difficulty in procuring information, and Robertson explained how Burgoyne could have been saved by an expedition up the Hudson with a simultaneous attack upon New England.

The Whigs were now in their turn alarmed. The testimony was going too far. It was not only injuring Howe, but was proving that the war was practicable. They tried to stop the witnesses; they would agree not to ask for a vote of exculpation of Howe if Germain would agree not to continue the testimony. But Germain insisted on proceeding, and he had, Burgoyne said, some sixteen or eighteen more witnesses on his list. The only hope of the Whigs was in the adjournment of Parliament, which was only a few days off and would stop everything. They delayed the testimony of Robertson and Galloway as much as possible by interruptions until at last Parliament was prorogued before the testimony of Galloway was quite finished.<sup>6</sup>

Howe, throughout the whole proceeding, had shown his usual callous and contemptuous indifference. His statement or defence before Parliament was afterwards published as his "Narrative," and Galloway criticised it with severity in his "Letters to a Nobleman on the Conduct of the War." Howe replied in his "Observations;" and Galloway again assailed him in "A Reply to the Observations of Lieutenant-General Sir W. Howe." This last attack seems to have been the

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<sup>5</sup> See Jones, "New York in the Revolution," vol. i, p. 162, for a very hostile loyalist criticism of him. A life of him will be found in Appleton's "Cyclopædia of American Biography."

<sup>6</sup> "Diary and Letters of Thomas Hutchinson," vol. ii, p. 201, and note at end of introduction to Burgoyne's "State of the Expedition from Canada."



## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

severest and most detailed arraignment of Howe that was published. Galloway openly accused him of being in league with a large section of the Whigs to let the rebellion go by default unless it could be settled in a Whig way without credit to the Tories.

Indeed, several of Howe's accusers were so definite in their charges, going into the details of his whole three years' command to support what they said, that it is rather surprising that the adjournment of Parliament was allowed to end the matter. There would seem to have been offence enough for three or four duels.

"While your letters," said Israel Mauduit, "are continually boasting that you would bring the enemy to battle and a decisive action your motives are ever calculated to prevent it. And with all your fair promises it was you that protracted the war and you that avoided a battle much more carefully than Mr. Washington did. And when to save appearances and seem to do something you did begin an action, you invariably took care that it should not be decisive. After the most tedious and affected delays and haltings half way to show the rebels your intention and give them time to provide against it, you sometimes did expose the King's troops to the loss attending an attack; but invariably called them off upon its success; and took care never to expose the rebels to the ruin attending a rout and pursuit.

"Five times, sir, even in the beginning of the rebellion, did the rebels' ignorance or temerity put them into a situation where they might have easily been shut up and destroyed. Five times did your superior care or tenderness leave them a way open for their escape." ("Three Letters to Lieut. General Howe," 1781, p. 7.)

Mauduit asserted that a Whig had said, "I have no apprehensions from General Howe taking the command; he is one of us and will do the Americans no harm." Judge Jones said that Howe ought to have been hung. Hutchinson reports the same remark made in London; and it would be easy to fill much space with quotations that reveal the very violent feeling against him.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>"Diary and Letters of Thomas Hutchinson," vol. ii, pp. 169, 170, 172, 173, 177, 185, 222, 336; Stedman, "American War," edition 1794, vol. i, p. 384; Jones, "New York in the Revolution," vol. i, p. 261; *Annual Register*, 1779, chap. vii.

## HOWE'S "NARRATIVE"

Hutchinson reports a conversation in February, 1780, which seems to show that opinion was sometimes divided as to whether the Howes had protracted the war for the sake of a Whig compromise or for the sake of making money.

"I thought they all along flattered themselves they should be able to effect a conciliation, and therefore, never pursued the rebels to that length they otherwise would have done. That they might fancy, he said, at first, but it was not possible after two years' experience. They might prolong the war, he sometimes thought, for the sake of enriching themselves. The General, he said, certainly lived in a different state from what he had ever done before." ("Diary and Letters of Thomas Hutchinson," vol. ii, p. 330.)

Harry Lee, in a review of Howe's campaigns, takes in some respects the same view as Galloway and describes Howe's failure to join Burgoyne and follow up his advantages at Long Island, Brandywine and Valley Forge as most extraordinary blunders, inexplicable and "mysterious inertness." But he refuses to join the English critics in believing that Howe was too friendly to the Revolution; he cannot think, he says, that an English general would be so disloyal; and he suggests that the murderous scenes of his attack on Bunker Hill overwhelmed his mind and extinguished his spirit for the rest of the war.<sup>8</sup>

Howe's "Narrative" was a dignified but fallacious defence. By means of vague general statements he gives the impression that the patriot forces always outnumbered his. If we can believe him, the American continent was swarming with vast hordes of rebels, which almost every hour were threatening the destruction of his little army, which the Ministry would not reinforce. It was wonderful that he had maintained himself unannihilated for three years.

He affected a great inability to obtain information of the condition of the country and of Washington's army which every one who has studied the history of his campaigns knows to be untrue. Washington himself said that it was almost useless to try to deceive Howe; for he seemed to have full

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<sup>8</sup> Lee, *Memoirs*, vol. i, pp. 49-55.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

information of everything. All of Howe's battles and movements show that, through the loyalists and his spies, he knew the roads, the nature of the country and the exact condition of the patriot army almost as accurately as it was known by the patriots themselves. The perfect accuracy and timing of his movements at Long Island and Brandywine and their complete success were quite evidently the action of a man who knew every minute detail of the country and of his enemy.\*

When he gives numbers he gives his own force by leaving out all the officers; but in counting the patriot force he adds officers and imaginary privates without limit. For example, at Brandywine, where he had 18,000 and Washington 11,000, he says he had only 14,000, but that Washington had "about fifteen thousand exclusive of almost any number he pleased of militia."

By a similar vague statement he makes it appear that the patriot forces in the year 1777 were fifty thousand, because the Congress had voted to raise that number. He complains on almost every page that the reinforcements he was continually asking for, with which to meet these innumerable hordes, were not furnished him. How, then, could he be expected to put down such a rebellion?

The question might be asked how it happened, when the patriots were so numerous and dangerous, and his army was so small, that he placed two small outposts of fifteen hundred men each at Trenton and Bordentown, fifty miles away from his main army at New York?

He describes the natural difficulties of the country, the opportunities for ambuscades, and the heat of the weather as insurmountable obstacles. If he had not always taken the greatest care in not going too near the vast masses of patriots, and in not letting them come near him, there would have been the greatest hazard to the King's troops. But he had always protected his army from the slightest check. His plan had been to keep his army intact; keep up the show of force and

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\* Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. vi, p. 449.

## HOWE IN PARLIAMENT

conciliate the patriots rather than run serious risks or resort to acts of severity.

He attached great importance to his taking of Philadelphia, and has much to say on the importance of manœuvring and occupying large towns rather than of destroying armies, although he admits in one passage that "the defeat of the rebel army is the surest road to peace."<sup>10</sup>

He took up again his old occupation in Parliament and joined heart and hand with the Whigs to prove more and more the impracticability of the American war and to cripple the administration of Lord North. He afterwards held important military offices, but never again took part in active war. He lived to the ripe age of eighty-five, dying in 1814, so that he saw the second war for independence, and his brother's old friends obtain their independence on the ocean as well as on the land.

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<sup>10</sup>For further criticisms on Howe, see "A Letter to the People of America," p. 63, London, 1778; "Strictures on the Philadelphia Mischianza, or Triumph on Leaving America Unconquered," London, 1779; Stevens, "Fac-similes of MSS.," vol. i, pp. 81, 82. Judge Jones gives a good summary of the loyalist view of the conduct of both the Howes. ("New York in the Revolution," vol. i, pp. 252-261.)

## LXIX.

### THE BRITISH MAKE THEIR LAST SUPREME EFFORT FOR COMPROMISE

THE plan of ending the war by offering the Americans such a compromise as would dissuade them from allying themselves with France had been discussed in London before Christmas, 1777, and in February took definite shape in some measures known as the Conciliatory Bills. These bills were introduced in Parliament by Lord North on the 17th of February, eleven days after the American treaty of alliance with France had been signed in Paris. They were hurried through both houses in the hope that news of their passage might reach America before the Congress had learned of what had been done in France and certainly before that body had ratified the treaty made in Paris. To this end rough drafts of the bills, as soon as they had been introduced in Parliament, were sent over to the Congress.<sup>1</sup>

The purpose of the Conciliatory Bills was to make a supreme effort for reconciliation, or compromise, which would preserve America as some sort of dependency of Great Britain, even if attached by a very slender thread. The acts which were finally passed began by explaining that taxation by Parliament for the purpose of raising a revenue was found to occasion great uneasiness among his Majesty's faithful colonists in America, who, nevertheless, might be entirely willing to make a voluntary contribution, through their local legislatures, towards the common defence of the empire. Therefore, no duty or tax would hereafter be imposed by Parliament in North America or the West Indies, except such duties as it

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<sup>1</sup> Stedman, "American War," vol. ii, pp. 5, 6; Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. vi, p. 488 note; Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iii, p. 103.



## THE CONCILIATORY ACTS

would be expedient to impose for the purpose of regulating commerce; and the net produce of those duties would be paid over for the use of the colony wherein they were levied.

This, it will be observed, was nearly a literal acceptance of the terms put forth in the documents sent to England, as an ultimatum by the first Congress in the autumn of 1774, when the majority in the Congress were in favor of denying the authority of Parliament over the colonies, except as regards "our external commerce for the purpose of securing the commercial advantages of the whole empire." The Ministry had evidently studied those documents of 1774 with care, and were determined to follow them very closely in this new offer of peace.

Having made this great concession in the matter of taxation, the Conciliatory Acts went on and repealed the famous old tea tax and also the act changing the government of Massachusetts, and then provided that five commissioners should be sent to America with very full power for negotiating a compromise on the basis of these repeals. They were authorized to negotiate with any organized body of the people and give it the title it preferred, which meant, no doubt, that they should recognize the Congress and carry on their negotiations with it as well as make a treaty with any single state or district that would submit. They could proclaim a cessation of hostilities, grant pardons, appoint temporary governors in any of the colonies, and most important of all, suspend the operation of any objectionable acts of Parliament which had been passed since the 10th of February, 1763.<sup>2</sup>

In other words, although the right of Parliament to regulate the colonies in matters other than taxation was not withdrawn, yet the withdrawal of taxation, the repeal of the old tea tax, the repeal of the act changing the government of Massa-

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<sup>2</sup>There were three conciliatory acts, 18 George III, chaps. 11, 12 and 13. See Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iii, pp. 80, 104, 129; W. B. Reed, "Life of Joseph Reed," vol. i, pp. 371-399, 422-437; Snow, "Administration of Dependencies," pp. 379, 382, 384, 386; Correspondence of Henry Laurens, p. 99.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

chusetts, and the broad, though vague offer to suspend the operation of any other objectionable acts, was a very great concession and a remarkable change of front on the part of Great Britain.

The instructions to the commissioners were still more liberal. They were to admit the claim to independence during the negotiations. They were to agree that no standing army should be kept in America in time of peace, that no colonial government or charter should be changed, except by the consent of its people, and that the colonies be allowed a representation in the British House of Commons. They were also to hold out the consideration that, ultimately, the people of each colony might be allowed to elect their own governor subject to the approval of the Crown. If the people showed a tractable disposition and made suitable voluntary contributions to the common defence of the empire, still greater privileges might be given to them. Trade would be beneficially regulated; the Congress might continue to exist if it did not infringe on the sovereignty of the mother country; and the Declaration of Independence need not be formally rescinded, but left to be inferentially abolished by the adoption of the treaty of peace and compromise.

As to the very vital question whether the Americans might not insist that Parliament recede not merely from its right to tax, but from its right to regulate the colonies in any case whatsoever, the commissioners were instructed to be very careful and wait for suggestions from the Americans themselves.<sup>a</sup>

The commissioners could not, of course, finally conclude any treaty. They could merely negotiate terms according to their instructions, and these terms could be finally confirmed only by Parliament. If this should raise a suspicion among the Americans that the Ministry were not sincere and that all these wonderfully liberal offers constituted a mere trap to stop the war and lead them back into subjection, the commissioners

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<sup>a</sup>The instructions are printed in the "Life of Joseph Reed," vol. i, pp. 430-436.

## LIBERAL TERMS

were instructed to point to the acts already passed, the repeal of the tea tax and the repeal of the act regulating the government of Massachusetts as proof of sincerity and that all promises and terms would be faithfully fulfilled.

According to an English pamphlet of that time, the ultimate intentions of the Ministry were even more liberal than the terms of the instructions. They intended to allow the colonies their own army and navy, Great Britain retaining the right of declaring peace or war with foreign powers; but every other sovereign power was to remain with the Congress of the colonies. A letter of the time also declares that everything short of a total independence would be granted. The colonists would be allowed to elect their own governors, their depreciated paper money would be funded in England, and two or three millions in specie lent them if they desired it. Under such broad terms, the colonies could apparently have obtained more self-government than Canada, Australia, or any British colony now has, or has any prospect of obtaining, an independence under a protectorate or suzerainty just short of absolute independence.<sup>4</sup>

Some of the Whigs, especially the Duke of Richmond, Fox, and other followers of Lord Rockingham, were in favor of absolute independence, because it would settle the question at once, save expense, and an independent America would trade with England as much as, if not more than, colonial America had traded.<sup>5</sup> The mass of the Whigs, however, could not very well object to the now Tory peace proposals, for they were the same that Whigs had often urged. But they were sorry to see the Tories taking the wind out of the Whig sails.

Old Lord Chatham, who, however much he favored the Americans, was always furious at the thought of their being allowed anything resembling independence, denounced the new

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<sup>4</sup> "An Examination into the Conduct of the Present Administration," etc., p. 54, London, 1779; W. B. Reed, "Life of Joseph Reed," vol. i, p. 373.

<sup>5</sup> Parliamentary Debates, March 17, 1778.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

proposals. He was carried into the House of Lords to make against the proposed peace the last speech of his life. At the close he fell fainting into his seat. His favor to the Americans did not extend so far as such a peace as that. He wanted the colonies to remain subservient dependencies, real colonies, so that from his oration on this occasion we do not prepare quotations for our schoolboys to recite.

It is not likely that England has ever made such a strong effort to bring about a peace as the Ministry attempted in these conciliatory acts. Hutchinson says that they first threw out hints to be circulated in London to test the temper of the nation and see if the people would favor granting independence. Possibly the Ministry had had thoughts of throwing up the sponge and acknowledging independence. But judging that the people of England were not prepared for this step they adopted the plan of a compromise, which, although very close to independence, was somewhat vague and if the Americans should accept it left opportunities for reducing them to subjection in the future. Having finally decided to try for this loose sort of compromise, they entered upon a most elaborate discussion of methods and the instructions for the commissioners were carefully prepared.<sup>6</sup>

According to Hutchinson, the Tories were thoroughly disgusted with the Conciliatory Acts and loathed every sentence of them. But they all declared that they would vote for them and support the Ministry because it was worth while to try their effect in drawing the Americans away from France, and stopping what promised to be a terrible European war. It was apparently a deep humiliation for them. It had been supposed that a British army never surrendered; and when Burgoyne surrendered and surrendered to rebels, it was supposed that the bottom of national disgrace had been reached. But when the rebels obtained the alliance of France which threatened British interests in India and the West Indies, and the Parlia-

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<sup>6</sup> "Diary and Letters of Thomas Hutchinson," vol. ii, pp. 196-199, 203, 204; Stevens, "Facsimiles of MSS.," vols. 4, 9, 12 and parts 1 and 5.



## THE PEACE COMMISSIONERS

ment of the great Anglo-Saxon nation hurriedly appointed a peace commission and dispatched it across the water to beg or buy a peace from the Americans with unlimited promises, the question was very naturally asked if there were to be any lower depths of degradation.

Many were, of course, foretelling the complete extinction of England as a world power, and every form of gloomy foreboding was heard in London during the next year; for in such times the melancholy strain in the English nature sets no limit to its depression.

In America it was strongly suspected that the extraordinary air of liberality and concession which surrounded the Conciliatory Acts was intended merely as a desperate attempt to excite a separation among the colonies and a break up of their union, which could be taken advantage of by England. When a large cargo of printed copies of the conciliatory bills was sent to Philadelphia and the copies circulated through the country, Washington thought at first that they were mere forgeries like many other spurious documents sent out by the British to encourage loyalists and win over hesitating patriots.<sup>7</sup>

There appears to have been great difficulty in obtaining any one of importance in England to serve on the new peace commission. No man of force or eminence would accept; and the commission as finally made up of Governor Johnstone, William Eden and Lord Carlisle, carried no weight from the personality of its members.

Governor Johnstone, the most prominent man on it, was a naval officer who, having ruled West Florida for a short time under the appointment of Lord Bute, was always spoken of by the title "governor," although it was usually contrary to English taste to refer to a colonial governor by his title. He was a Whig member of Parliament, who had taken the Burke and Chatham line of argument of extreme friendliness

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<sup>7</sup> Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iii, pp. 173, 174; Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. vi, pp. 475 note, 480, 482 note, 483, 485, 492, 497 and notes, 500 note, 500.



## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

towards the American patriots; and his rather clever and effective speeches can be read in the debates. He was a man of society and affairs, and had the reputation of being a gallant duelist, although only three of his duels have been recorded. He fought one with Lord George Germain, the colonial secretary, in which, after the second shot, Germain said: "Mr. Johnstone, your ball struck the barrel of my pistol." "I am glad," said Johnstone, "that it was not your lordship's body." Johnstone always spoke highly of Germain's behaviour in this duel, which went a long way towards restoring that nobleman's reputation for courage, which had been so much damaged at the Battle of Minden. Johnstone seems to have acted as the leading member of the commission; and the Ministry, no doubt, thought that they had made a good stroke of policy in putting on the commission a prominent Whig for whom the Americans would feel a certain friendliness.

William Eden, a lawyer, brother of Robert Eden, the last colonial governor of Maryland, was the Tory member of the commission, and a respectable man of mediocre talents, not at all calculated to make an impression in America. He afterwards became secretary of Ireland and ambassador to France, reaching the peerage under the title of Lord Auckland.

Lord Carlisle was a Scotch nobleman; a man of fashion and letters, of moderate ability, who afterwards became viceroy of Ireland and was the uncle and guardian of Lord Byron, the poet. At the time of his appointment to the commission he was only thirty years old, interested in public life, had favored a conciliatory policy towards America and was, no doubt, willing to accept any office that would give him political experience. Out of regard for his rank and position as a nobleman he was made president and head of the Commission.<sup>8</sup>

To these three were added the two former commissioners,

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<sup>8</sup> Appleton, "Cyclopædia of American Biography;" Jones, "New York in the Revolution," vol. i, p. 663; British Dictionary of National Biography; W. B. Reed, "Life of Joseph Reed," vol. i, p. 423; "Diary and Letters of Thomas Hutchinson," vol. ii, pp. 197, 201, 202, 214.

## COMMISSIONERS ARRIVE

General Howe and Admiral Howe, who, being still in America and having had vast experience in the peace and compromise business, could receive the three commissioners from England and start them on their course.

No time was lost in dispatching Eden, Johnstone and Carlisle, and on the 21st of April they left England in the "Trident." A week before that date a French squadron of twelve ships of the line and four large frigates under Count d'Estaing sailed from Toulon for America, followed in June by a British squadron under Admiral Byron.

The war-ship "Trident" containing the three peace commissioners reached Philadelphia about the 6th of June, and to their great astonishment they learned that the town was to be evacuated within a few days by orders which had been sent out from England. Such a show of weakness would surely, they thought, not help their mission and would tend to make all peace proposals a mere laughing stock among the patriots. Johnstone declared that if he had known of it he would never have come out on the commission. He and his fellow commissioners besought Clinton to postpone the evacuation until they could negotiate with the Congress. But Clinton replied that his orders were peremptory and could not be delayed.<sup>o</sup>

In fact, the sailing of the French fleet for America rendered it necessary to evacuate Philadelphia quickly or it might not be possible to evacuate it at all. The French war vessels would blockade the Delaware and keep Clinton's army and Lord Howe's fleet locked up there, until they were starved into a surrender. Clinton and Lord Howe had a very narrow escape as it was; and when Clinton said that the evacuation could not be delayed he spoke the truth. But it was a very unlucky or a very bungling piece of statesmanship to have the evacuation and the proposals for peace occur at the same time.

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<sup>o</sup> Gordon says that the commissioners themselves brought out the sealed and secret orders to evacuate ("American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iii, p. 130), but it is probable that the orders had been received in Philadelphia some time before the arrival of the commissioners. (W. B. Reed, "Life of Joseph Reed," vol. i, pp. 423, 427.)

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

The evacuation was to take place on the 18th of June, so that the commissioners had less than two weeks to present their proposals to Congress before they would be compelled to make an ignominious retreat with the army to New York. Clinton sent word to Washington of the arrival of the commissioners and asked for a passport for their secretary, Rev. Dr. Ferguson, who wished to carry a letter from them to the Congress. The passport was refused and this was their first rebuff. They then sent to Washington a letter, together with a copy of their commission and other papers, setting forth the terms of peace, and Washington sent all these documents to the Congress. The formal reading of them proceeded until a sentence offensive to France was reached, when the further reading was suspended and taken up again some days later, when an answer was returned.<sup>10</sup>

The great pains the Ministry had taken to repeal several acts of Parliament, withdraw their right of taxation in America, organize a commission and empower it to suspend the operation of other acts of Parliament, must necessarily, it would seem, be entirely rejected by the Congress. In November, very soon after the surrender of Burgoyne, the Congress had passed a resolution declaring that all proposals of peace from Europe inconsistent with the independence of the United States or with such alliances as they might form with foreign nations would be rejected. This was to assure France that they would not compromise, but would stand out for absolute independence. In April when they received the rough drafts of the conciliatory bills that had been introduced in Parliament they passed resolutions denouncing those bills as a mere insidious scheme to disunite the American states and prevent foreign powers from interfering in their behalf. On the 3rd of May they received for ratification the treaty with France that had been made by their commissioners in Paris,

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<sup>10</sup> Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iii, p. 120; Journal of the Congress, vol. ii, pp. 588, 590; Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. vii, pp. 58, 59, 60 and notes.

## ANSWER OF THE CONGRESS

and they ratified it. How then could they in June, under any rules of honor or common sense, compromise with England and accept from her less than absolute independence? Our treaty with France was an offensive and defensive alliance, in which we stipulated to maintain our absolute independence; and, unless we achieved entire independence of Great Britain, France had no object in making an alliance with us. If we returned to any sort of relationship or compromise with England such a combination of the Anglo-Saxon race would be dangerous to France and all the continent of Europe. It was the mission of France to separate, not unite, the Anglo-Saxons.

The Congress, therefore, could return only one answer. They referred to their resolutions passed in April. They had hesitated, they said, about reading a document which contained expressions disrespectful to their ally. They resented the assumption implied in repealing the acts of Parliament, and which also appeared in every document of the commissioners, that the people of the United States were still the subjects of Great Britain. They were inclined to peace and would willingly negotiate with Great Britain a treaty of peace and commerce, which should acknowledge the independence of the United States and not be inconsistent with their treaty with France.<sup>11</sup>

This was undoubtedly the right position to take. It was the position of the most extreme and devoted patriots and it was the position which finally prevailed. But the party led by Richard Henry Lee and the Adamses, which had assisted the cabal against Washington, was always inclined to break loose from France and negotiate with England without regard to France. The British Conciliatory Acts and peace commission were shrewdly designed to develop this party, and the decision of the Congress to stand by France was not accepted by the patriot

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<sup>11</sup> Journals of the Congress, vol. ii, pp. 345, 521-524, 591-592; Stedman, "American War," vol. ii, p. 9. The commissioners sent to the Congress a second letter, and it was voted that no answer to it should be returned. Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. vii, p. 120 note.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

party at large without debate and discussion. The Conciliatory Acts, while on their face peace propositions, were very cunning war measures, intended to divide and break up the patriot party by the magnificence and liberality of the terms. They constituted a drag net which might bring peace or something that would offset the French alliance or give some advantage to the empire.

The definite part of the plan, the measures actually passed by Parliament, withdrawal of taxation and the repeal of two obnoxious acts, did not when critically examined, go very far. But the indefinite and fascinating promises which were vaguely and irresponsibly added seemed to indicate a friendliness and liberality from which great things might be expected. These new commissioners seemed to have powers for negotiation and compromise which had been lacking two years before when the Howe brothers offered reconciliation and peace. All this had an effect, and during that summer of 1778, in spite of the decision of the Congress and in spite of the patriot meetings at which the printed peace proposals were publicly burnt, there was great discussion of the subject, doubts, weakening, hesitation, and desire to meet half way even among staunch patriots. It was precisely what England wanted, and it threatened to disrupt the patriot party.

General Lee, who had been exchanged and had joined the army at Valley Forge, thought that this broad offer from England should not be slighted, that such an opportunity for the most favorable possible compromise should, at least, be seriously considered, the commissioners received and negotiations started. According to Lafayette, this view was so strongly held among a majority of Washington's officers, that they were unwilling to attack Clinton in his retreat across New Jersey, because it might jeopardize possible negotiations with the peace commissioners.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> "Memoirs and Correspondence of Lafayette," London edition of 1837, vol. i, pp. 50, 51; Arnold, "Life of General Arnold," p. 330; "Life of John Jay," p. 53.



## JOHNSTONE TRIES BRIBERY

On the 16th of June, the day before the peace proposals had been formally rejected by the Congress, Governor Johnstone had written to Robert Morris intimating that there would be high rewards for Washington and the President of the Congress, if they would bring about a compromise which would restore America to England.

"I believe the men who have conducted the affairs of America incapable of being influenced by improper motives; but in all such transactions there is risk, and I think that whoever ventures should be secured; at the same time, that honor and emolument should naturally follow the fortune of those who have steered the vessel in the storm, and brought her safely to port, I think Washington and the President have a right to every favor that grateful nations can bestow if they could once more unite our interest, and spare the miseries and devastations of war." (Gordon, "American Revolution," vol. iii, p. 171; W. B. Reed, "Life of Joseph Reed," vol. i, p. 379.)

On the same day that Johnstone wrote this letter he appears to have had a conversation in Philadelphia with Mrs. Hugh Henry Ferguson, a loyalist, whose husband was one of the British commissaries of prisoners; and Johnstone's purpose in this conversation was to discover how he could approach and influence General Reed, who was now a member of the Congress.

"Mrs. Ferguson," says he, and I think he looked a little confused, "if this affair should be settled in the way we wish, we shall have many pretty things in our power, and if Mr. Reed, after well considering the nature of the dispute, can, conformable to his conscience and view of things, exert his influence to settle the contest, he may command ten thousand guineas and the best post in the government; and if you should see him I could wish you would convey that idea to him." (W. B. Reed, "Life of Joseph Reed," vol. i, p. 384.)

The next day the Congress, which was sitting at York, Pennsylvania, formally rejected the peace proposals. The day after that Philadelphia was evacuated and the peace commissioners were bundled into the ships of the fleet to take refuge in New York. General Reed came into Philadelphia a few hours after the evacuation. He did not see Mrs. Ferguson until the evening of the 21st, when, the message being delivered to him, he replied that his influence in Congress was small, "but

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

were it as great as Governor Johnstone would insinuate, the King of Great Britain has nothing within his gift that would tempt me."

Within a few weeks, when it was discovered that Johnstone had made similar offers to Robert Morris and to Dana of Massachusetts, Reed brought up the whole subject before Congress, which, on the 11th of August, passed a resolution reciting all the facts, quoting the letters, and after denouncing this attempt at bribery, declared that no more correspondence or intercourse could be held with Johnstone.

The other commissioners immediately disavowed all knowledge of Johnstone's correspondence and Johnstone himself replied to the Congress in a letter, declaring that their resolutions instead of being offensive as intended, were to him a mark of distinction. He sneered at the Congress for their failure to carry out the terms of Burgoyne's surrender, and said that his favorable opinions of America had since the French alliance undergone a decided change. At the same time he announced that he would no longer act as a peace commissioner, but leave the whole business in the hands of his colleagues. He was compelled to this course; for he had become useless as a member of the commission.

He hurried back to England in September to resume his place in Parliament and give his voice, as he said, against the American claims to independency. Hutchinson reports his arrival in London on the 26th of October. From having been a Whig supporter of the Americans in Parliament, he now turned Tory, denounced the patriots and declared that "the infernals should be let loose on the colonies." He reaped his reward for this change of opinion. The Tories welcomed him to their ranks; the Ministry made him a commodore; and he was given the command of squadrons and expeditions far beyond his ability to handle with success.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> "Diary and Letters of Thomas Hutchinson," vol. ii, pp. 219, 220, 226, 235, 236; W. B. Reed, "Life of Joseph Reed," vol. i, pp. 424, 428; Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. vii, pp. 156, 157, 224. Eden and Carlisle reached England, Hutchinson says, December 22.

## PATRIOTS STAND BY FRANCE

His colleagues, Eden and Carlisle, remained in the country until November, diligently publishing arguments and information in favor of their mission, and apparently encouraged by the discussion among the patriots to hope for a favorable result. The Congress and the patriot party made no attempt to check the publication of the peace proposals or the discussion of them; and the whole question had a fair chance.

The act of Parliament creating the commission, provided that it should continue in existence until the 1st of June, 1779, which would seem to indicate that the Ministry expected the commissioners to take abundant time and spare no effort to create such divisions and weakness in the patriot party as would lead to compromise. The intention apparently was to try the effect of keeping before the Americans for a year very liberal peace proposals and suggestions of reconciliation in the hope that persistence would bring some result.

But the more the subject was discussed the more the patriot party saw the folly of breaking faith with the French nation, which had already actively and substantially assisted them. Why should they desert this friend, who was interested in their independence, and turn to the English, who, though liberal now with promises, had, nevertheless, spent the last fourteen years in trying to restrict their liberty? If they broke faith with France would they not forfeit the respect of all other nations?

The commissioners, moreover, had no authority to conclude a treaty. They could only negotiate terms and then submit the terms to Parliament for acceptance. Parliament could accept or reject as it pleased, and, while this long process was going on, England would be gaining time and strength. The longer the commissioners remained in the country the more the suspicion gained ground that England's sole purpose in putting forth the very liberal terms of the Conciliatory Acts was merely a desperate attempt to excite a separation among the states, a break up of their union and a consequent breach of their treaty with France. If only one or two states should fall away from the French treaty, and negotiate with England,

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

a great deal would have been accomplished. In the confusion of such a situation the British Ministry could take such advantage as circumstances might indicate.

General Howe had returned to England early in the summer and neither he nor his brother, the Admiral, took any part in the commission, which they perhaps regarded as a mere Tory measure. Even after the others had returned to England the main idea of their mission was not abandoned, and the Ministry kept the trap open all the rest of the war. The party led by Richard Henry Lee and Samuel Adams in the Congress continued its suspicions of France, and by various indirect ways the Ministry sought to encourage this party and was ready at any moment to take advantage of any proposal that would weaken or break the French alliance. The French minister Gerard and his successor Luzerne, residing near the Congress at Philadelphia, considered the feeling against their nation so strong that they took unusual means to check it, and by salaries and gifts procured the assistance of General Sullivan, Paine and Dr. Cooper of Boston, to write essays and by every other means "inspire sentiments favorable to France."

On the 3rd of October when the peace commissioners finally decided to return to England they issued a terrible proclamation which announced that, as the rebels had contumaciously refused his Majesty's more than liberal offers of peace, the character of the war would now be changed. There would be no more olive branch; but devastation, fire, sword and the merciless vengeance, which some of the loyalists had already called for, would be wreaked upon the rebel country. In the early part of the war under Howe, they said, the English army went through your country with the greatest forbearance, because it was expected that we should soon be sitting once more with you under the shade of the same vine. We raised no contributions, destroyed no docks or storehouses, quitted Boston and Philadelphia without injury, leaving large stores behind. We treated you as children and friends under a temporary separation. But now, as you have allied yourself

## CHANGE OF METHODS

with France, our hereditary and bitterest enemy, we shall treat you as a foreign enemy; as strangers to our blood; and we shall inflict upon you all the severities of war.

There was, of course, an outburst of Whig eloquence in Parliament against the cruelty of this proclamation; the barbarity of devastation and slaughter to be inflicted on English people who were to be tortured, killed and robbed in order to make them affectionate colonists. The threat of the proclamation, was, however, not an idle one; and to the extent of their now crippled power the Ministry carried it out. The French alliance and the retirement of the Howes changed the whole situation. The peace commissioners passed from the stage of history, but not before Lafayette had sent a challenge to Lord Carlisle for a remark his lordship had made that "the perfidy of the French nation was too universally acknowledged to require any new proof."<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Cobbett, "Parliamentary History," vol. 20, pp. 1, 830, 851, Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iii, pp. 173-175; "Memoirs of Lafayette," London edition, 1788, vol. i, p. 61; Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. 7, p. 207; Pontgibaud, "A French Volunteer in the War of Independence," p. 63; "Life of Colonel Hanger," pp. 158-161; Jones, "New York in the Revolution," vol. i, p. 150; Durand, "New Materials for History of American Revolution," pp. 137, 190, 196, 197, 205, 206, 215, 216, 223, 226; *Annual Register*, 1770, chap. ii; Stedman, "American War," vol. ii, pp. 40-66.

The Conciliatory Bills and the efforts of the commissioners are said to have increased the number of loyalists. (Documents Relating to the Colonial History of New York, vol. viii, pp. 783, 787).



## LXX.

### CLINTON ABANDONS PHILADELPHIA AND FIGHTS THE BATTLE OF MONMOUTH

GENERAL HOWE'S successor, Sir Henry Clinton, was about forty years old, with less military experience than Howe, but of fairly good ability. We have already seen something of him in his unsuccessful attempt to take Charleston and in his successful capture of the Hudson Highlands.

About the time that Howe placed the Hessian outpost at Trenton in December, 1776, Clinton, it will be remembered, with a force of ships and men took possession of Newport, Rhode Island. Immediately afterwards he went to England full of indignation and anger against Lord George Germain, the secretary for the colonies, who had published in a mutilated and unfavorable form, a letter of Clinton's describing the attempt to take Charleston, and the reason for its failure. Germain had timely notice of Clinton's coming, and not caring for either a quarrel or a duel, had one of his retainers wait for him at Portsmouth and deliver to him a letter full of approval and eulogy of his conduct in America and begging him to return there where his great abilities were so sorely needed.

Clinton, however, was not to be put off in that way; and Germain hastily promised him the thanks of both houses of Parliament and the Order of the Bath for his valor in the conquest of Rhode Island, which was taken without resistance, garrisoned, as Judge Jones remarks, by loyalists, Quakers and old women. Germain, Jones says, was so anxious to appease Clinton, that, the Order of the Bath being full, he used his influence to have an additional place constituted in order to let in the man he feared. So there was no duel; Clinton was

## CLINTON'S INTENTIONS

satisfied; and returned to America with his easily won knighthood.<sup>1</sup>

But this may not have been the end of the quarrel. Germain, of course, had no love for the man who had driven him to such straits and added to the reputation for cowardice he had acquired at the Battle of Minden. As colonial secretary, Germain was the executive of the Ministry for carrying on the war, prepared the dispatches and instructions and exercised not a little influence on decisions. Now that Clinton was in full command in America, Germain had it in his power to make or mar him; and the final upsetting of Clinton's plans by the Ministry may have been caused by Germain's desire for vengeance.

In his later years Clinton must have often wished that he had refused Germain's glittering bribes, and forced him to a duel. If left to himself, Clinton had an honest and firm intention to save the colonies for the empire in the true Tory fashion in which rebellions had been put down in Ireland; and he set about it in a way that drove the patriots to desperation and for a time promised success. If he had had Howe's large army and opportunities he would have undoubtedly altered the course of history. With Franco against him his task was difficult and yet he came very near succeeding.

His first business, under the instructions of the Ministry, was to abandon the farce of holding Philadelphia, which had never been of much use to the British cause and had now become an exceedingly dangerous place, because the powerful French fleet under D'Estaing, which was on its way from Toulon, would in all probability block up the Delaware, shutting in Admiral Howe's fleet and rendering it useless. The army could then no longer remain in Philadelphia because they relied upon communication with the sea as their main source of supply; and if the army attempted to remain the French might take New York, which was defended by only four thousand men.

To rescue both the fleet and the army from this impending

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<sup>1</sup> Jones, "New York in the Revolution," vol. i, pp. 131, 132.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

disaster in Philadelphia and concentrate them in New York for its defence, was Clinton's imperative duty. But, moving an army between Philadelphia and New York was no longer the child's play such movements had been to Howe with his large force, and no danger from a French fleet if he went by sea.

The whole British force had been much reduced since the French alliance. There were now only 2000 troops in Rhode Island, 4000 in New York and from 8000 to 10,000 in Philadelphia; or, in other words, Clinton had only about half the number which the Ministry had given Howe.

Washington, with his usual advantage of spring recruiting, had some 4000 militia at Wilmington and the Hudson Highlands; and his force at Valley Forge, which was the one that would directly oppose Clinton's Philadelphia army, was about 11,000. The two armies, American and British, therefore, started this new phase of the war about equal in numbers; but with the advantage, of course, in discipline and equipment in favor of the British.<sup>2</sup>

The Ministry, apparently, expected that the 10,000 Philadelphia troops would be taken to New York by sea; and Clinton, at first, had this intention. Subsequently, however, he wrote the Ministry that he must go by land, because there were not enough transports to receive the whole army at once; and if he were detained by winds, Washington would have a

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<sup>2</sup>Stedman, "American War," vol. ii, p. 14; *Magazine of American History*, vol. ii, p. 407; Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. vii, p. 8 note. There has been some difference of opinion as to the number of men Clinton had in Philadelphia. Bancroft says 17,000, Lafayette 14,000 and Judge Jones 30,000. The last estimate of 30,000 is so extravagant that it may be a misprint. Clinton himself said in his MS. notes that the Philadelphia army had recently been reduced by 12,000, which would have left hardly more than 8,000. Washington, who was vitally interested in estimating Clinton's numbers correctly, puts them at between 9000 and 10,000. Jones, "New York in the Revolution," vol. i, p. 202; "Memoirs and Correspondence of Lafayette," vol. i, p. 50; Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iii, p. 133; MS. notes to Stedman's "American War," Carter-Brown collection, vol. ii, p. 6.

## POSSIBLE MOVEMENTS

chance to attack New York. In after years, in his manuscript notes to Stedman's "American War," Clinton boasted that by going by land he had saved both the army and the fleet; and by this he appears to have meant that he saved them from the French fleet, which reached the coast only a few days after he got into New York.<sup>3</sup>

The marching of his 10,000 men across New Jersey was by no means an easy matter now that Washington had 11,000 with which to oppose him; and his masterly accomplishment of the task won him considerable applause in Europe. Even in starting he managed to conceal his intentions so well that three days before he left Philadelphia, no one in the patriot army was sure what he intended to do. Washington thought he would cross New Jersey. Some thought that he would attack Washington at Valley Forge; others that he would march towards Lancaster to draw the patriots into a pitched battle; and it was suggested that he might take up a position near the head of Chesapeake Bay, have the fleet come round into the bay, and by means of the Susquehanna River have communication with the Western Indians.

It was also thought that he might occupy the lower part of the State of Delaware and extend his position from the mouth of Delaware Bay across the peninsula to the Chesapeake. He would thus have easy access to the ocean for supplies and be in a fertile prosperous country, strongly loyalist. General Lee believed that this position would be so strong that the British could never be dislodged from it.<sup>4</sup>

Washington was so much in doubt that he sent scouts and surveyors to explore all these regions and report on the roads and strong positions. But Clinton had no purpose, except to reach New York; and about three o'clock in the morning of

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<sup>3</sup> Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. vii, p. 52 note; Clinton MS. notes to Stedman's "American War," vol. ii, p. 20, in Carter-Brown collection at Providence.

<sup>4</sup> Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. vii, pp. 63 note, 28 note, 4; J. J. Boudinot, "Life of Boudinot," vol. i, p. 120.



## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

the 18th of June, part of his army marched down into the level neck of land south of Philadelphia, and by ten o'clock had crossed over to Gloucester on the Jersey side while the rest, consisting of the main body according to Boudinot, crossed directly from Philadelphia at Cooper's Ferry.<sup>5</sup>

He was accompanied by a large number of loyalists who intended to leave the country; and three thousand more went with General Howe and the Admiral on the fleet which immediately after the evacuation of the town started down the river. Part of the fleet with General Howe on board went to England and the rest with the Admiral went to New York to help Clinton get into the town.

Clinton's next difficulty would be his long march in hot weather through the Jersey sand, with his army and great baggage train strung out in a long line offering a tempting opportunity for a flank attack. If he escaped this danger, how was he to get his ten thousand men into New York, which was surrounded with wide bodies of water? If he went straight towards New York, as the Pennsylvania Railroad now goes, he might become involved in the Raritan River and its marshes, and beyond the Raritan were other rivers and bodies of water. Washington might crowd him into these marshes and, summoning militia from all over the country, give him the same fate as Burgoyne. He might, perhaps, have had vessels from New York meet him at New Brunswick on the Raritan River. But the river was narrow, hardly more than a creek, and he might be attacked in embarking or suffer great damage before the ships could reach wider waters. But, nevertheless, it is supposed that when he first set out he intended to try this New Brunswick route; or possibly his movement in that direction was a mere feint.<sup>6</sup>

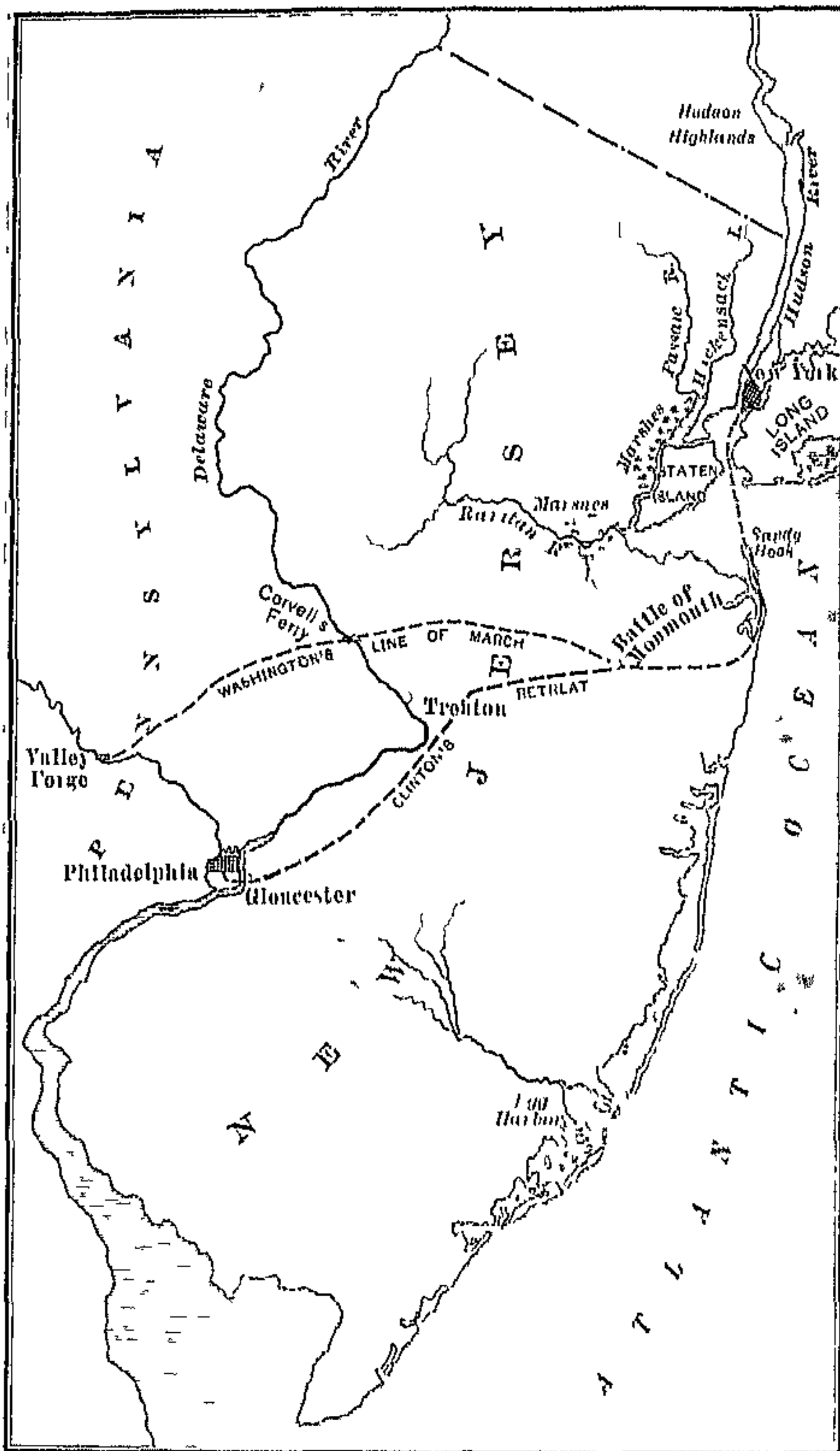
Washington had at first thought of throwing a strong de-

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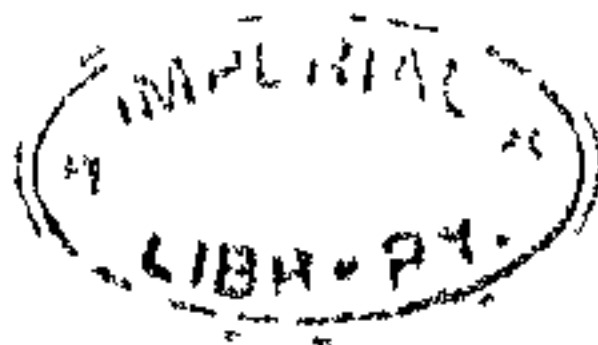
<sup>5</sup> J. J. Boudinot, "Life of Boudinot," vol. i, p. 134.

<sup>6</sup> Clinton's notes to Stedman, vol. ii, p. 17; Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. vii, p. 77 note; Lee, Memoirs, vol. i, p. 57; Stedman, "American War," vol. ii, pp. 16-17.





MAP SHOWING CLINTON'S RETREAT FROM PHILADELPHIA TO NEW YORK



## CLINTON'S MARCH

tachment into New Jersey in front of the British so as to make their passage through that state difficult and dangerous. But he had over 3000 men sick or under inoculation for the small-pox who would be left weakly guarded at Valley Forge; and a detachment into New Jersey before the British left Philadelphia would encourage them to attack Valley Forge. The danger of detachments had recently been exhibited at Barren Hill, and at Paoli.<sup>7</sup>

After abandoning this plan he appears to have had no intention of attacking the enemy on their march. He preferred to let them go to New York while he took his army to the important strategic position in the Hudson Highlands and made sure of its defence. But gradually he changed his mind. He abandoned Valley Forge and having passed over the Delaware at his favorite crossing place, Coryell's Ferry, some miles above Trenton, his march inclined towards that of Clinton so that the two armies would probably meet. Clinton, observing this, is supposed to have changed his plan of going to New Brunswick, which had been his first intention, and he now took the road which led to Sandy Hook.<sup>8</sup>

His immense baggage train was strung out in a line ten or twelve miles long. He had expected to meet with opposition in a country with many naturally strong places that could be held by the enemy, and he had taken with him an unusually large quantity of provisions. No doubt the baggage of the loyalists also increased the length of his train. The heat was so intense that the heavily clad and heavily loaded regulars were sinking from exhaustion, and many of them were found dead beside the springs and streams.

The majority of Washington's officers were opposed to any attempt upon the enemy; but Washington himself was growing more and more in favor of it; and several of his officers, Hamil-

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<sup>7</sup> Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. vii, pp. 24, 28 note, 30, 40, 41.

<sup>8</sup> Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. vii, pp. 41 note, 77 note; New York Historical Society Collections, 1872, vol. ii, p. 463.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

ton, Lafayette and Wayne, were eager for a battle, and had nothing but words of contempt for the decision of the majority. The patriot troops were now the best army Washington had thus far commanded. Not only had they been drilled under Steuben, but General Greene, who had taken Mifflin's place as quartermaster-general, had greatly improved the whole equipment and organization. Patriot prospects were so bright with the French alliance, the obvious weakness of England in offering a compromise and in evacuating Philadelphia, that if Clinton could be kept from New York, or even seriously crippled, the peace commissioners would be compelled to negotiate a recognition of absolute independence, instead of a compromise.

On the other hand, the present fortunate state of affairs, with the alliance of France, the weakness of England, and the evacuation of Philadelphia, seemed to the majority of the officers a strong argument for letting well enough alone and for not putting to the hazard of a single engagement the present happy result of three years of war. As matters stood at present, there was a good chance for negotiating a compromise which might give practical independence. But if an attack on Clinton failed the chances would be greatly lessened. Lafayette describes Lee as arguing eloquently on this side and convincing most of the generals. He would, he said, not only let the British alone, but he would build a bridge of gold to encourage them to go into New York, because with present peace prospects a successful attack could not much improve the situation and a failure might spoil everything.<sup>9</sup>

Subsequent events showed that this difference of opinion among the officers was quite violent and deep rooted. When the army halted at Princeton in New Jersey, Washington again put the question to a council of war and the majority answered as before that a general engagement was not advisable, but that

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<sup>9</sup> Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. vii, pp. 67 note, 72 note; vol. 8, p. 381 note, and "Correspondence of Lafayette," London edition of 1837, vol. i, pp. 50, 51; New York Historical Society Collections; Lee, Papers, vol. iii, pp. 174, 83.

## LAFAYETTE AND LEE

a detachment of 1500 should be sent to act as occasion might serve on the enemy's flank and rear. Washington immediately sent this detachment under command of a Virginia officer, General Scott. He had already sent Maxwell with 1200 men to hang about the enemy and annoy them as much as possible.<sup>10</sup>

The next day, the 25th of June, having advanced to Kingston, he sent 1000 more men under Wayne to join the others who were approaching the enemy, and offered the command of the whole of this advance corps to General Lee. Lee declined it, apparently because he disapproved of fighting any sort of engagement, and this detachment seemed more suited to a less important officer. The command was then given to Lafayette, and with his advance corps near the enemy, the main patriot army marched from Kingston on the night of the 25th and the next morning were at Cranberry.

The day was too hot for marching; and word was sent to Lafayette to come within nearer supporting distance of the main body. On the 27th Clinton, believing he was to be attacked in the rear, drew his best troops to that point and placed his long baggage train in front in charge of Knyphausen's division.

Lee, finding that his refusal to take command of the advance corps was unfavorably commented upon and having changed his mind on the subject several times, finally asked to be reappointed. Lafayette describes himself as consenting to this change when Lee pleaded and said, "My fortune and honor are in your hands; you are too generous to cause the loss of both." Lee was accordingly sent forward with reinforcements for the advanced corps and took command of it with Lafayette as his subordinate.<sup>11</sup>

The British were now strongly encamped near Monmouth Court House with their rear half encircled by the American advanced corps, and Lee had orders to attack them as soon as

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<sup>10</sup> Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iii, pp. 131-134; Lafayette, *Memoirs*, vol. i, p. 51; *Pennsylvania Magazine of History*, vol. ii, p. 140.

<sup>11</sup> Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. vii, pp. 73, 75.



## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

they began to move the next morning, which was the 28th. When morning came Knyphausen started about day-break with the heavy baggage train and Clinton followed in the rear about 8 o'clock, with his picked division of as fine troops as there were in the British army.

Washington's orders to Lee were not in writing, and there was afterwards some dispute about them. Some who heard the conversations between the two generals said that he was instructed to attack and bring on an engagement with the enemy in any event. But Lee always insisted that he had been given full discretion to attack or not according to circumstances; and the last instructions he received were certainly to that effect, according to Washington's own statement and the sworn testimony of the officer who carried the instructions.

As soon as Washington heard that Knyphausen had started he put his own army in motion and sent word by Colonel Meade to Lee that he was coming, and directed Lee to have the advance corps disencumber themselves of their knapsacks and blankets, and attack Clinton's rear unless some very powerful circumstance should forbid it.<sup>12</sup>

Lee pressed forward to carry out these orders, but received very contradictory reports of the position of the enemy. Some told him that the main body had marched and that those who remained were only a small covering party. But General Dickinson, who had special charge of obtaining information, assured him that the main body had not yet marched and that if he moved towards them he would be in a perilous situation.

Nevertheless, he went on and by reconnoitring discovered what seemed to be a covering party or rear guard of from 1500 to 2000 British troops, cavalry and infantry. They might, he thought, be cut off if there was sufficient space between them and the main body; and Wayne was accordingly ordered to

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<sup>12</sup> New York Historical Society Collections, 1873, vol. iii, pp. 7, 8. Washington said that his instructions to Lee were to attack "unless there should be very powerful reasons to the contrary." (*Id.*, vol. ii, p. 443.)

## LEE REPRIMANDED

attack this covering party in a moderate manner so as merely to halt them, while Lee with the rest of the patriot troops passed round to cut off their retreat.

But as Lee moved towards their rear their numbers seemed to increase, and as he was reforming some of his men to meet this new condition, General Scott's troops, mistaking some of the movements for a retreat, began to fall back, which brought on a general retreat of all the patriot force, followed by the British. Lee was at first surprised and indignant at this retreat. But on further reflection and becoming convinced by what he saw and heard, that the enemy were no longer a mere covering party, and were being reinforced by the main body of the British army, he accepted the retreat as the best move that could be made, and proceeded to conduct it.

At first he thought of halting and making a stand on the edge of a ravine with the village of Freehold as a cover to his right flank; but on closer examination he found this position would be untenable. He then sent Du Portail to select a position farther in the rear, which was also found untenable, because it was commanded by a small hill separated from it by a ravine and had in its rear a swamp over which there was only one narrow road or causeway. Finally, high ground and a strong position were seen on the other side of the swamp, and to this point Lee was marching his troops to make a stand when he was met by Washington with the main army.

Washington, of course, knew nothing of the circumstances at the front. He merely saw a retreat and some of the demoralized stragglers in front of it at a time when he was looking forward to an attack and victory. It was evidently one of the rare occasions when his passionate nature broke loose. He addressed Lee in terms of sharp reprimand.

"I desire to know, sir, what is the reason—whence arises this disorder and confusion."<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> New York Historical Society Collections, 1873, vol. iii, pp. 81, 112, 147, 156, 191.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

Lee defended himself, explained the situation, and the two men had an altercation of some length in which there was undoubtedly a great deal of heat and very likely much stronger language than has been reported. Washington demanded of Lee why he had gone at all on such an expedition unless he had intended to go through with it. The commander-in-chief was in a towering rage; and we have a humorous description of the way in which he relieved his mind. General Scott, who prided himself on his own ability in profanity, was asked if he had ever heard Washington swear.

“Yes, once; it was at Monmouth, on a day that would have made any man swear. Yes, sir, he swore on that day till the leaves shook on the trees, charming, delightfully. Never have I enjoyed such swearing before or since. Sir, on that memorable day he swore like an angel from Heaven.” (*Pennsylvania Magazine of History*, vol. ii, p. 141 note. See also *Monmouth Inquirer* of Freehold, New Jersey, April 25, 1878.)

Washington at once halted the patriot troops and formed them for battle, and Lafayette speaks of his superb appearance on this occasion. He was always at his best on horseback; and now when aroused by disappointment, his outburst at Lee and the necessity of saving the day, he seemed as Lafayette said, to arrest fortune by a glance. His bearing, courage and decision were never displayed to such advantage; and “he was never greater in battle,” says his admirer, “than in this action.”

Lee had had at the front about 4000 troops and whether his conduct was right or not depends largely on whether the British before him were increasing in numbers and their main body coming up. Lee's 4000 were certainly equal to attacking the covering party of 1500 or 2000, but were no match for the main body or increasing numbers which, according to one witness, amounted to 6000 or 8000 men. Wayne and some other officers appear to have thought that there was nothing to oppose Lee except the small covering party. But the British accounts of the battle, afterwards published, show that Lee was entirely correct in believing that he was confronted

## LEE NOT IN FAULT

by the main body of the enemy and that Dickinson was also right in warning Lee that if he advanced he would advance into the main body.

As soon as Clinton had heard of Lee's approach he had supposed that it was an attempt on his baggage train. To give time to Knyphausen to escape with the baggage, Clinton turned all the rest of his force to the rear with the intention of attacking Lee with such severity that all the other patriot forces would be drawn to Lee's assistance and prevented from pursuing the baggage.<sup>11</sup>

In short, an impartial view of all the evidence of the witnesses at the court-martial afterwards held, together with the accounts of the battle given by the British, fail to show that Lee was in fault. His retreat seems to have been both fortunate and necessary. At the moment when Washington met him, he had brought the troops out of a bad strip of country about two and a half miles in length, in which all the positions were favorable to the British, and he had just reached a good position to make a stand.

After the altercation with him, Washington directed him to form the troops on that ground, which both had selected as the place to halt; the British came up and there was severe fighting, several charges by the British light horse as well as the infantry, which were repulsed with heavy loss. Pontgibaud, who was present, says that one regiment of the Guards lost half its men. Clinton tried to turn the American left and then their right, but without success. The discipline of Steuben apparently enabled our troops to protect their flanks much better than in the days of Howe. Foiled at every point, and with 300 of his troops lying dead in the blazing sun, Clinton fell

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<sup>11</sup> New York Historical Society Collections, 1872, vol. ii, pp. 403, 404; Stedman, "American War," edition 1774, vol. ii, p. 10; New York Historical Society Collections, 1873, vol. iii, pp. 110, 140, 141, 155, 167, 121, 122, 125, 128, 161, 144, 148, 178, 163; Drake, "Life of General Knox," pp. 56-59; Clinton's "Observations on Stedman's History," pp. 5, 6; Lee, Memoirs, vol. i, p. 59.



## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

back to a strong position where his flanks were well protected by woods and swamps.<sup>15</sup>

Washington, still hungry for a general engagement, moved up to attack him but night came on before he could begin. Lee had been sent to form the reserve of the army at English-town three miles away. Both sides went to rest under arms, Washington and Lafayette lying down on the same cloak at the foot of a tree, and discussing the conduct of Lee.

They would probably have begun another action the next day; but at midnight Clinton withdrew his whole army somewhat as Washington had done at Trenton, and marching in the cool darkness had joined Knyphausen and the baggage and was far beyond pursuit when the hot daylight arrived. The village of Monmouth, says Pontgibaud, presented a pitiable sight when the patriots entered and found the wounded which the British had left behind, five young officers of the guard regiment that had been cut to pieces, their legs and arms amputated, and their colonel, one of the handsomest men Pontgibaud had ever seen, slowly dying in the greatest agony.

As in many other battles of the Revolution, there is great disagreement as to the losses on each side. Washington estimated from the number of British dead his men buried, that Clinton's loss must have been about 300 killed, possibly a thousand wounded, only a few taken prisoners, but hundreds deserted. His own loss was, he said, the very slight one of 60 killed, 132 wounded, and 130 missing. But Clinton reported the British loss as only 124 killed, of whom 59 had died of the heat, 170 wounded, and 64 missing. The American loss, he said, was supposed to have been greater than his own, especially in killed.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Pontgibaud, "A French Volunteer of the War of Independence," p. 56; Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iii, pp. 131-151; Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. vii, pp. 80, 88, 89, 81, 94, 96 note; Lee's Court Martial in vol. iii of New York Historical Society Collections, 1873; Stedman, "American War," vol. ii, pp. 19-24.

<sup>16</sup> Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. vii, pp. 91, 94; New York Historical Society Collections, 1872, vol. ii, pp. 447, 465, 467; Stedman, "American War," edition 1794, vol. ii, p. 21.



## CLINTON REACHES NEW YORK

After leaving the scene of the battle, Clinton got into New York in a most skilful way. Keeping clear of the Raritan River and its marshes, he went out on Sandy Hook where he had arranged, it seems, that the fleet coming from Philadelphia should meet him and transport his army into New York.

In spite of the delays of calm weather in going down the Delaware, the fleet anchored off Sandy Hook on the 29th of June, and the next day Clinton and his army were there. The heavy baggage and artillery were at once put on the fleet; and as the weather permitted the army was gradually transferred to the ships. On the 6th of July they were all safe in New York.<sup>17</sup>

Three days afterward, on the 9th, the French fleet, after a long voyage, was at the mouth of Delaware Bay and on the 11th they reached Sandy Hook, whence Clinton on the 6th had escaped to New York. There was, therefore, a margin of only five days by which Clinton's army and possibly the British fleet had escaped a heavy disaster if not total destruction. The French fleet was superior in size of ships and number of guns. They had twelve great ships of the line, one of 90 guns, one of 80 and six of 74, besides several large frigates and 4000 land forces. Admiral Howe's largest ships were of 64 guns and the rest of 40 and 50.

If D'Estaing had reached the mouth of the Delaware before the British fleet got out, he could have locked it in there; or if he had met it on the ocean he might have delayed or scattered it; and in either of these events it could not have gone to the assistance of Clinton. If D'Estaing had come upon it anchored at Sandy Hook, he might have easily prevented it embarking the troops for New York and might have inflicted a severe loss.

Clinton's army of less than 10,000 men might, in any of

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<sup>17</sup> Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iii, p. 154; Jones, "New York in the Revolution," vol. i, pp. 264, 273, 274; Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. vii, p. 97 note; Lee, Memoirs, vol. i, p. 64.

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these ways, have been isolated in New Jersey, unable to reach New York and unable to return to Philadelphia. He had already lost, it is supposed, 1500 men by desertion, heat and the Battle of Monmouth, and he would soon have been surrounded by patriot continentals and militia and compelled to surrender like Burgoyne. Washington believed that both army and fleet would have fallen and that such a great stroke would have ruined Great Britain.

It was a most critical occasion. A little good luck for the patriots, a little delay of Clinton, or a little more speed in D'Estaing's fleet, might have made the French alliance overwhelmingly effective, thrown the Tory Ministry out of power and brought in a liberal Ministry which would have quickly recognized the independence of the United States. But as it happened, the war was prolonged for three years' more and came very near ending in favor of Great Britain.

Clinton's praises were sung in England and Europe. His retreat from Philadelphia with his ten thousand was compared to the retreat of Xenophon and his ten thousand Greeks from Babylon to the sea. The Raritan was the Euphrates and the sand hills of Jersey were the mountains of Carduchi.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. vii, pp. 107, 160; "Thoughts on the Present War," etc., London, 1783; *Magazine of American History*, vol. ii, p. 407; vol. iii, p. 355; Stedman, "American War," vol. ii, p. 26; "Operations of the French Fleet under Count de Grasse," pp. 16, 182 note; Johnson, "Life of General Greene," vol. i, p. 103.

## LXXI.

### LEE'S CONDUCT AND TRIAL

WASHINGTON and the Congress regarded Monmouth as a great patriot victory; and it certainly was one if judged by their estimate of the small number of killed and wounded on the American side compared with the heavy British loss. Clinton and the English, however, regarded it as a British victory. They had foiled Washington, they said, in his attempts on their baggage train and foiled him in his attempt to prevent them getting into New York. But the battle accomplished little or nothing of importance for either side except to depress more than ever the cabal against Washington. Judged from a modern standpoint Monmouth was a very indecisive action.

It is highly probable that no further difficulty over Lee's conduct would have arisen if he had kept silent and let the matter drop. By leaving him to form the troops on the new ground selected, Washington is supposed to have shown that he intended to make no further complaint. But Lee was stung by the language that had been used and very soon wrote to Washington an injudicious letter. The letter complained that he had been charged with disobedience of orders or want of conduct or courage. It was, he said, a cruel injustice.

"And I think, sir, I have a right to demand some reparation for the injury committed, and unless I can obtain it I must in justice to myself, when this campaign is closed (which I believe will close the war), retire from a service at the head of which is placed a man capable of offering such injuries; but at the same time, in justice to you, I must repeat, that I from my soul believe that it was not a motion of your own breast, but instigated by some of those dirty carwigs who will forever insinuate themselves near persons high in office; for I really am convinced that when General Washington acts for himself no man in his army will have reason to complain of injustice or indecorum." (New York Historical Society Collections, 1873, vol. iii, p. 99.)

Up to the time of sending this letter Lee seems to have

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

committed no serious fault. But the letter was too disrespectful to the commander-in-chief to be overlooked. Several officers, notably Wayne and Scott, had been urging Washington to bring Lee to trial for misconduct in not attacking the British covering party, which, in their opinion, was at the most only two thousand and not supported by the main army. Hamilton was also strongly opposed to Lee, calling him a "driveler in the business of soldiership or something much worse," and describing his conduct in the battle as childish, monstrous and unpardonable.<sup>1</sup> Washington was obliged to appoint a court-martial. In fact Lee requested it in his letters; and three charges were preferred:

I. Disobedience of orders in not attacking the enemy on the 28th of June, agreeable to repeated instructions.

II. Misbehaviour before the enemy on the same day by making an unnecessary, disorderly and shameful retreat.

III. Disrespect to the commander-in-chief in two letters dated the 28th of June and the 1st of July.

Gordon, whose statements as a contemporary are certainly entitled to weight, says that many were of the opinion that Lee should have been found guilty only on the last charge of disrespect to the commander-in-chief, and Jared Sparks in his "Life of Lee," after carefully examining all the evidence taken by the court-martial, is of the same opinion.

The second charge of an unnecessary, disorderly and shameful retreat is not supported by the evidence taken at the trial. There may have been some disorder here and there caused partly by the heat of the weather. But a large proportion of the officers who were examined denied that there was general disorder. The charge of disobedience of orders was also unsupported by the evidence, because it was shown that the last instructions to Lee left him at liberty to use his discretion. The court-martial, however, found Lee guilty on all the charges, merely softening their finding on the sec-

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<sup>1</sup> New York Historical Society Collections, 1872, vol. ii, pp. 438-440, 467-471.

## COURT MARTIAL OF LEE

ond by saying that the retreat was disorderly in only some few instances.

According to Gordon there were people who believed that the court regarded the two letters to Washington as so grossly insubordinate and disrespectful, that they found Lee guilty on the other two charges because of the greatness of his offence in the last one. The sentence of the court that he be suspended from command for a year was supposed also to indicate that the court were inclined to think him innocent on the first two charges; for, as both Harry Lee and Gordon pointed out, if he had really been guilty of disobedience and an unnecessary and shameful retreat on such an occasion, a year's suspension was a very trifling punishment.

The finding of the court-martial was sent to the Congress to be confirmed; and here Lee had another chance; for he had many friends in that body. The subject was much debated; and Paca of Maryland urged that each charge brought against Lee should be considered separately. If this had been done it is not unlikely that the Congress would have confirmed only that part of the court's decree which found Lee guilty of disrespect to Washington. But Lee spoiled all his chances by going to Philadelphia, writing and talking too much and too cleverly, and abusing Washington. Reed reminded him that he was putting it out of the power of his friends in the Congress to help him; and Lee replied that nothing would stop him from exposing the wickedness of his persecutors, that he would not beg for friends, all he wanted was common justice. In short, his indiscretion seems to have put the Congress in such a position that a vote to help him would have been a vote of want of confidence in Washington. The party that had wanted to displace Washington a few months before was still of some strength in the Congress and the majority would not do such a foolish thing as to play into their hands. They therefore confirmed the whole decision of the court-martial.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> New York Historical Society Collections, 1872, vol. ii, pp. 475, 480; vol. iv, 1874, pp. 152, 153, 313-317; Henry Lee, *Memoirs*, vol. i, p. 63; Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iii, pp. 151-154.



## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

For alleged abusive language of the commander-in-chief, Lee was challenged by Washington's aide, Colonel John Laurens, and they fought a duel on the old Point No Point road north of Philadelphia. They fired at six paces and Lee was slightly wounded in the side. He was willing to fire again, but his second, Major Edwards, and Hamilton, who was second for Laurens, decided that the affair should go no further. Lee, in the customary duelling tone of the time, spoke highly of his antagonist. "The young fellow behaved splendidly," he said. "I could have hugged him."<sup>3</sup>

Both Wayne and Baron Steuben wrote letters, which were in effect challenges to Lee for comments he had made on their evidence before the court-martial; but these disputes were satisfactorily settled without duels. Lee, in his turn, challenged a member of Congress, William Henry Drayton, of South Carolina, who had been particularly active in procuring confirmation of the whole decision of the court-martial, and had also, in a charge to a grand jury in South Carolina, accused Lee of military treason in not joining Washington in the retreat across New Jersey in 1776. The correspondence between the two men, both trained masters of invective, is most amusing for its poignancy and vituperation. But Drayton declined the challenge because he did not consider himself accountable to an officer of the army for language used as a judge and as a member of the Congress.<sup>4</sup>

Lafayette in his memoirs says that if Lee had ever succeeded Washington in the command, he would have turned over everything to the British. But he does not suggest that Lee had any treacherous design in retreating at Monmouth.<sup>5</sup> Hamilton, however, in a eulogy on Greene, delivered in 1789, referred quite pointedly to a sinister motive for Lee's conduct at Monmouth.

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<sup>3</sup> New York Historical Society Collections, 1873, vol. iii, pp. 283-285.

<sup>4</sup> *Id.*, vol. iv, pp. 152-157, 318, 321, 331.

<sup>5</sup> "Memoirs and Correspondence of Lafayette," London edition, 1837, vol. i, p. 38.

## SUSPICION AGAINST LEE

"There let me recall to your indignant view, the flower of the American infantry flying before an enemy that scarcely dared to pursue—vanquished without a blow—vanquished by their obedience to the commands of a leader who meditated their disgrace." (Hamilton's Works, Lodge edition, vol. 7, p. 29.)

Colonel Laurens, who fought the duel with Lee, also suspected him of some treachery at Monmouth. Laurens was no doubt influenced in this opinion by his friend Hamilton, and in his turn influenced his father, President Laurens of the Congress, who in an obscure letter seems to say that the remarks of his son remind him of other circumstances tending to prove Lee's treachery. Hamilton seems to have been the principal source of all these suspicions, and he persuaded Elias Boudinot to believe in them.<sup>6</sup>

Hamilton's accusation has been accepted and enlarged upon in modern times by at least one historian, especially since the discovery of Lee's plan for conquering America, which, while a prisoner, he is supposed to have submitted to General Howe. By bringing on a defeat of the patriot army at Monmouth he intended, it is said, to show the correctness of the opinion he had given in the council of war against making the attack. Washington would then be displaced for ordering such an ill-advised attack, Lee would succeed him, and as head of the army might play a part like that of General Monk at the time of the Restoration. He could suggest a compromise peace on the basis of the recent British proposals, and if it succeeded, he might expect a high reward from the British Government.<sup>7</sup>

It must be confessed, however, that this suggestion seems rather fanciful, and far fetched. If Lee really thought that he could displace Washington, by himself incurring a disastrous defeat, he had less sense than has been generally supposed. The suspicion against him is supported by no evidence, fact or circumstance that can be collected from the court-martial proceedings, or any other record of the time. Hamilton

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<sup>6</sup> New York Historical Society Collections, 1872, vol. ii, pp. 472, 474.

<sup>7</sup> Fiske, "American Revolution," 1st edition, vol. ii, pp. 69, 70.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

and Laurens never put forth their opinions as anything more than suspicions and produced no facts in support of them. It is true that Lee's character was, in many respects, a contemptible one, and that his conduct when a prisoner was of a very treacherous complexion; but from that we cannot infer that he contemplated treachery at Monmouth unless there are some positive facts tending to show it.

His career, however, was now ended. He retired to Virginia and lived in the Shenandoah Valley on a large estate, called by him Prato Rio, which he had bought with the money the Congress had voted him as a compensation for his property confiscated in England. At Prato Rio he bred horses, enjoyed the company of his dogs, and attempted farming, for which he was quite unfit. We have no means of knowing the effect upon the dogs of association with such a man. But Lee never learned from them certain straightforward qualities which some dogs could have taught him. He collected the volumes of his favorite authors in a great barn of a house, consisting of one large room with the kitchen in one corner, his bed in another, the books in a third and saddles and harness in a fourth.

"Sir," he said, with his unfailing humor to a visitor, "it is the most convenient and economical establishment in the world. The lines of chalk which you see on the floor, mark the divisions of the apartments, and I can sit in any corner, and give orders, and overlook the whole without moving my chair." (New York Historical Society Collections, 1874, vol. iv, p. 322.)

He wrote anonymous newspaper articles against Washington, sarcastic, foolish pieces, ruining his own reputation and doing Washington no harm. There seems to be no question that he always entertained a petty jealousy of the commander-in-chief, and a desire to supplant him. In this respect he exactly resembled Gates, who was also an Englishman of the British regular army who had joined our service. The narrowness of these two men is in striking contrast to the broadness of other officers like Greene, Lafayette or Wayne, better soldiers than Lee or Gates, with more reason for desiring the highest

## DEATH OF LEE

command, but in whose careers it is impossible to find the slightest disloyalty to their chief.

When the term of Lee's suspension had expired, he heard a rumor that the Congress intended to dismiss him for the sake of economy in the service. He wrote them a most impudent letter, which he afterwards regretted; but after receiving the letter, they could do nothing but expel him from the army.

After a few years he left Prato Rio to visit Baltimore and Philadelphia, and died in an inn at the latter place in the autumn of 1782. The Philadelphians gave him a magnificent funeral attended by a great concourse of people, the clergy of all denominations, the President of the Congress, the officials of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the French ambassador, with other prominent and distinguished persons, and they buried him in the yard of old Christ Church; for opinion had not then set so strongly against him as it has in modern times.<sup>8</sup>

The defects of his character may have partly arisen from the impossibility of his position. He was like some of the loyalists, neither an American nor an Englishman. He had left the English army largely from spite because he was not promoted. He had little confidence in American troops; and always retained his insular awe of the British regular. His last words in his delirium were, "Stand by me, my brave grenadiers!" Although he was among the first openly to recommend a declaration of independence he afterwards receded from that position as the contest progressed, and favored a compromise which would in some vague way keep America within the great British fetich—the empire. While he may have been sincere in his professions as an English Whig, he never could entirely conceal his contempt for what he considered the vulgarity of American republicanism. Like the loyalists he could see no rewards or life outside of the empire; and it is not improbable that he looked forward to a possibility of being received back in England with distinction. His plan of conquest submitted

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<sup>8</sup> New York Historical Society Collections, 1874, vol. iv, p. 161.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

to Howe, and his secret letter to Burgoyne may have been the petty methods of a petty mind to secure an end which Arnold, cast in larger mold, strove to accomplish by one bold stroke.

Holding himself in a position which heartily favored neither side, his actions naturally became inconsistent or contemptible. That we should have accepted and used a creature in some respects more contemptible than Arnold, may have been unfortunate; but we were in a struggle for national existence; and it cannot be denied that his services were valuable. Lafayette, who had a great dislike for him, always believed that his advice had saved the army at the time of the retreat from Harlem Heights to White Plains. Washington thought highly of him; labored earnestly to secure his exchange when he was a prisoner; and in the spring of 1778, only two or three months before the Battle of Monmouth, he was so anxious for Lee's speedy return that he instructed Boudinot to strive to effect the exchange by every means in his power; "for he was never more needed than at the present moment."

In a letter written about the same time, he said, "I wish most heartily for the aid of General Lee in council and upon every other occasion." When at last it was announced in the early part of May that Howe would release Lee in Philadelphia and send him to Valley Forge, great preparations were made in the camp to receive him. The officers, drawn up in two lines, advanced two miles on the road. Washington and his staff rode out two miles farther and waited for him. When he appeared Washington dismounted to receive him and at the camp he was entertained by a dinner and a band of music.

It is impossible to suppose that Washington was not as well aware of Lee's failings as were other people of that time; but he seems to have found him useful; and no doubt Lee's knowledge of European military theories and details, and his facility in suggestion and arguments, were of great value in the patriot camp. In spite of his quarrel with him at Monmouth, Washington in writing of his death to his sister, describes him as a man "who possessed many great qualities."

Some of the best patriot officers remained friendly with



## LEE'S FRIENDS

Lee to the last. Knox testified strongly in his favor at the court-martial. Greene believed that great injustice was done him; and Harry Lee declared his conduct at the battle was highly creditable and the sentence of the court-martial an absurdity. With Wayne, who testified against him and challenged him to a duel, he afterwards exchanged friendly letters; and it appears that he never lost the good will of Samuel Adams, Robert Morris, Schuyler, Sullivan and Lincoln.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> New York Historical Society Collections, 1874, vol. iv, pp. 1, 8, 17, 18, 35, 37, 333; vol. iii, pp. 356, 375, 379; Boudinot's Journal, pp. 77, 78; Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. vi, p. 501; J. J. Boudinot, "Life of Boudinot," vol. i, p. 144.

## LXXII.

### THE CONDITION OF PHILADELPHIA; THE MASSACRE OF WYOMING AND THE TAKING OF KASKASKIA

WHEN Washington started to pursue Clinton across New Jersey he, of course, arranged for the immediate occupation of Philadelphia by a small patriot force. If for no other reason, such an occupation was necessary in order to preserve order; for the town would be without a government of any sort when the British army withdrew.

Allen McLane, with his rough riders who had been seizing the loyalist market wagons all winter, was the first to enter the town. He rode in by Second Street, turned up Chestnut and took prisoner Captain Sandford, who had incautiously remained among the stragglers of the British army. The city had a looted, dirty appearance, with garden fences torn down for firewood, and empty, dismantled houses. The enemy had professed to abstain from serious destruction, and yet the damage to private property was very great. In the suburbs, more than five and twenty country seats had been burnt; and in the town the damage was estimated at over \$1,000,000, which was a heavy loss in a small community.<sup>1</sup>

Over this dilapidated town, demoralized by the occupation of a hostile army, full of loyalists assuming airs of contempt for rebels and patriots longing to be revenged on loyalists, General Arnold was placed in command. One cannot help thinking that he would have been better employed with Washington in New Jersey at the Battle of Monmouth, where his dash and heroism might have given us better history to write. His command at Philadelphia at once brought out the evil side

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<sup>1</sup> W. B. Reed, "Life of Joseph Reed," vol. ii, p. 33; newspaper edition of Westcott's "History of Philadelphia," in Historical Society of Pennsylvania, chap. 262.

## ROBERTS AND CARLISLE

of his character. Instead of mollifying political resentments or taking the patriot side, he increased the bickering and quarrelling. He associated with the loyalists, and married one of them, Miss Peggy Shippen, who had figured in the *Mischianza*. He was rapidly becoming a full-fledged loyalist. He was insolent and overbearing to patriots, indulged in reckless speculation, became over-eager for wealth, and was crazed by the social prominence which a certain set of loyalists affected, and which led them to run after everything English.

In the confused condition of affairs during that summer of 1778, the patriots were, of course, in control of the city government and they proceeded to revenge themselves on the loyalists in exactly the way Galloway and his friends had expected when they applied to General Howe for advice. Among the 3000 who wisely went away with Howe, were apparently all the most important people who had taken an active part in assisting the British to govern Philadelphia. If they had remained there would surely have been some terrible scenes to record.

The patriots, however, found forty-five obscure persons who having performed very minor duties under the British had believed themselves safe in remaining. These were all indicted for high treason against the patriot government of Pennsylvania. Twelve of the indictments were thrown out by the grand jury and the remaining twenty-three were tried, but all acquitted except Roberts and Carlisle.

Roberts had been active, like thousands of others, in assisting the British; he sold them provisions and helped to enlist recruits. Poor Carlisle had occupied no higher position than keeping one of the city gates and issuing passes. Both of them were Quakers, which may have helped to secure their conviction.

Inasmuch, however, as Galloway and all the really important loyalists had escaped, and as the other twenty-one who were tried had been acquitted, it seemed inhuman and cruel to hang these two unfortunates, who had served in such very small capacities, who had done nothing more than thousands

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

of loyalists in other places had done and were doing, and who in what they had done had the excuse that they were in a town completely occupied by the British and in which, while they remained, they had a moral right to follow some occupation.

Thousands of people, patriots as well as loyalists, took this view of the question, and the executive council of the new government of Pennsylvania was flooded with petitions asking that both Carlisle and Roberts be pardoned. But the council and the patriot officials in power were inexorable, and proceeded to carry out the sentence of the court in a way which is much to be regretted and reminds one too much of the French revolution. The two victims were led through the streets each with a rope round his neck, tied to the tail of a cart in which was his coffin, and large crowds attended their execution.

The episode reveals to us the passion and heat of the time. At the very time that people were pleading for mercy to Roberts and Carlisle, the loyalists of New York had joined themselves with Indians and committed a horrible massacre of men, women and children in the Wyoming Valley of Pennsylvania, and Clinton had raided New Bedford in Massachusetts. The majority of the patriot party were clamoring for vengeance. The important loyalists had escaped; but there must be victims of some sort, no matter how insignificant and pitiful.<sup>2</sup>

The treaty of alliance with France produced no favorable results that summer and autumn, but on the contrary, the trend of events began to set strongly against the patriots. In July, soon after the arrival of the peace commissioners, but long before they had announced that the character of the war would be changed, an event occurred which in its merciless severity was exactly in line with the change which they finally

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<sup>2</sup> Newspaper edition of Westcott's "History of Philadelphia," chap. 264; Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iii, p. 190; W. B. Reed, "Life of Joseph Reed," vol. ii, p. 30; Jones, "New York in the Revolution," vol. i, p. 282; New York Historical Society Collections, 1873, vol. iii, pp. 248, 250, 252.

## SIR WILLIAM JOHNSON

proclaimed. It was an expedition which originated not with the British Government, but among the loyalists of the Mohawk Valley in New York and the Six Nations of Indians, that lived near by.

It has already been intimated that these loyalists were powerful and more or less united; they had strong affiliations with the Indians through the memory of Sir William Johnson, that romantic character who for many years had lived among the Indians like a baron of the Middle Ages, controlled them by force of character and sympathy with their wild life, and represented the British Government. His career and work had been continued by his son-in-law, Guy Johnson, and his son, Sir John Johnson.

The Indians, while remaining somewhat neutral, were always inclined to take the loyalist side, because they believed that Great Britain would win in the end. General Schuyler was credited with having kept these loyalists and Indians under control during the first three years of the war. He made a raid in 1775 with some 4000 patriot militia upon Sir John Johnson's baronial establishment, killed his peacocks, broke up the charming and interesting surroundings of his wilderness hall, and disarming and imprisoning a number of Scotch settlers, who were strongly loyalist, gave a very decided blow to loyalism in that region.<sup>9</sup>

His men, in returning, decorated themselves with the feathers of the peacocks; the raid was always known among loyalists as Schuyler's peacock expedition; and his enemies were fond of remarking that these feathers were the only laurels he ever won in anything approaching actual warfare.

Sir John Johnson soon afterwards abandoned New York and went to Canada, followed by many of the Indians, whose descendants live there to this day. His wife, who was a woman of much attractiveness and intelligence, was seized and held

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<sup>9</sup> For a description of this raid and a most sympathetic account of the Johnsons, see Jones's "New York in the Revolution," title "Johnson," in index.



## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

as a hostage, when her husband left the country. True to the romantic habits of the family, she managed to elude her guards and started on an adventurous sleigh ride through the State of New York. She was recognized by a patriot, who, apparently appreciating her courage and character, allowed her to pass, and she reached the British lines.

In addition to the depressing effects on the loyalists of his peacock expedition, Schuyler was afterwards able to exercise considerable control of the Six Nations of Indians by means of negotiation, "peace talks," and all the influence with which he and his family were familiar from their long experience in that region. But early in 1778 the loyalists and Indians appear to have emancipated themselves from this restraint; and in February Schuyler wrote Congress that there was evidence of the Indians preparing for an attack upon the New York, Pennsylvania and Virginia frontiers. The Congress did nothing and soon loyalists and Indians were sufficiently organized to strike a heavy blow of the kind that the loyalists had always recommended; for, as we have already observed, they believed that the war should have been conducted from the beginning with the utmost severity.<sup>4</sup>

Accordingly, in July, 1778, there was a terrible raid of loyalists and Indians in the Wyoming Valley of Northern Pennsylvania. There was an heroic resistance by a handful of old men and boys, but it was quickly overcome, the resisting settlers were pursued and butchered without mercy, the fort set on fire, the prisoners thrown into the flames and held down with pitchforks, or arranged in a circle and slaughtered by the tomahawk of the Indian Queen Esther.

When night came fires were kindled and the remaining prisoners chased, naked, back and forth through the flames until they fell exhausted and were consumed. Many of the women and children who tried to escape eastward to the Hudson River perished in the forests and swamps, and the invading force went through the neighboring country burning every

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<sup>4</sup> Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iii, pp. 184-191.

## CHERRY VALLEY MASSACRE

house, and shooting and scalping every human being that could be found. They accomplished, in short, that complete devastation which the British in former years had used for breaking the independent spirit of Ireland, and which the loyalists had been calling for as the only method that would save the American colonies for the British empire.

Such use of the Indians was assailed by Burke and other Whigs as barbarous and inhuman and defended by Tories and loyalists on the familiar ground of necessity, and as being in the end no more cruel than other warfare. All real war was, they said, devastation and destruction, and the severest and most terrifying methods were in the end the most merciful, because they brought hostilities more rapidly to an end. Except for mere appearances, it was said, there was no essential difference between the tomahawk and scalping knife of the Indian and the musket and bayonet of the British regular.<sup>5</sup>

The patriot leaders, who had dreaded the effect of Carleton's kindness and generosity to prisoners and who had feared that their followers would grow lukewarm for want of British atrocities under Howe, had now enough and to spare. There was another raid into Cherry Valley in New York; men, women, and children were slaughtered, and the settlement wiped out of existence. The whole northern frontier was for months deluged in blood and murders, which were not checked until, in the following year, 1779, Washington sent Sullivan with a force of 3000 troops, which broke forever the power of the Six Nations and loyalists in central New York.<sup>6</sup>

Besides the attack on Wyoming, the Indians in the far west in the Ohio Valley and down even into the Valley of the Mississippi, were being organized by the Canadian Government to prey upon the frontiers of the southern states and receive

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<sup>5</sup> "An Impartial Sketch of the Various Indulgences Granted by Great Britain," &c., pp. 35-40, London, 1778.

<sup>6</sup> *Massachusetts Historical Society Proceedings*, 1882-1883, vol. 20, p. 91; Miner, "History of Wyoming;" Niles, "Principles and Acts of the Revolution," edition 1776, p. 403; Van Tyno, "Loyalists," pp. 165, 167.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

rewards for scalps. The old outposts Detroit and Michilimackinac, of which so much was heard in the French and Indian wars and Pontiac's conspiracy, were still held by the British, and also Vincennes and Kaskaskia to the southward, near the confluence of the Ohio and the Mississippi, in what was known as the Illinois country. These forts were to be used as centres from which to encourage an Indian invasion like that which Lord Dunmore had hoped to accomplish. The southern states had already felt the first effects of these plans, when an expedition was organized in Virginia and put in command of Colonel George Rogers Clark. In June, 1778, with some 200 men, he undertook the journey of 1200 miles to Kaskaskia, which was on the east bank of the Mississippi between the mouth of the Ohio and St. Louis, then a Spanish post for the territory west of the great river.

They went out to the Monongahela River in Pennsylvania, where they procured boats and floated down to the Ohio, which they followed to within sixty miles of the point where it flows into the Mississippi. There they hid their boats and hurried northward on foot; but their provisions were soon exhausted, and when they came near Kaskaskia at midnight, they had marched for two days without eating. In desperate straits, unable to turn back, they attacked the town of about 250 houses in the darkness and accomplished a very complete surprise. Though quite well fortified, the English had supposed that their great distance in the wilderness rendered them perfectly secure. The governor, Philip Rochblave, was taken with all his documents and instructions from Canada to incite the Indians.

The scattered inhabitants of the region being largely French, willingly submitted. Cahokia on the east bank of the Mississippi almost opposite St. Louis and several other villages yielded, and finally the important post of Vincennes on the Wabash, east of Kaskaskia. Vincennes was shortly afterwards retaken by the British commandant at Detroit, Colonel Hamilton, who immediately laid extensive plans for driving the Americans out of the Illinois country and carrying out the

## TAKING OF VINCENNES

original purpose of making that whole region a source and stronghold for Indian invasion of the rebellious colonies. He felt secure for the winter because of the distance of Clark and the severity of the weather. Clark would probably have been driven out in the spring because his men were few and the French, believing him already conquered, were turning against him. But he started in mid-winter, and by a march of the utmost exposure and hardship, wading across leagues of the over-flowed bottom-lands of the Wabash, he reached Vincennes and took it on the 23rd of February, 1779. This gave the Americans actual occupation of the Illinois country for the rest of the war, and was an important reason for securing that region to the United States in the final treaty of peace in 1783.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> "The Conquest of the North West," vol. i, chaps. 8-11; Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iii, p. 101.

## LXXIII.

### THE FRENCH FLEET FAILS AT NEW YORK AND AT NEWPORT

WHEN Clinton escaped into New York, Washington took his army by leisurely marches to the Hudson River, crossed it and encamped at White Plains so as to threaten New York as much as possible and be near the strategical stronghold of the Hudson Highlands.

Ever since spring the utmost efforts had been put forth to make that important strategical position as impregnable as possible. Under instructions from the Congress, General Gates had been directed to provide galleys, gunboats, fire-rafts, chains, caissons, chevaux de frise and every imaginable device to replace the obstructions to navigation which Clinton had removed when he went up the Hudson to help Burgoyne. Heretofore the main protection of the Highlands had been Fort Montgomery and the ease with which Clinton had taken it seemed to indicate a defect in the method of defence.<sup>1</sup>

The plans were accordingly changed and West Point selected as the main reliance and centre for all the obstructions, fortifications and outposts. Most elaborate defences were constructed and no effort or expense spared to hold this part of the Hudson and keep open the communication between New England and the states to the south.

For the remaining three years of the war, Washington and his army always remained in the neighborhood of this stronghold. They usually occupied a semicircle from White Plains

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<sup>1</sup> Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iii, p. 77; Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. vi, pp. 234-236, 294 note, 490 note, 495.



## NAVAL WARFARE

on the east side of the Hudson to Morristown in New Jersey on the west side. The maintaining of this position was all the patriots could do against the new strategy of the Ministry and Clinton. No more pitched battles were fought in the North. Washington never met Clinton in the field. The two commanders, one impregnably intrenched in the Highlands and the other impregnably intrenched in the town of New York, simply watched each other from July, 1778, until September, 1781, when Washington made his sudden move to Yorktown, Virginia.

During that time Clinton confined his operations in the North to sudden raids and devastations at various points on the coast to which his command of the sea gave him easy access, and the patriots being without any sufficient navy could do nothing to prevent these devastations. Clinton's solid operations, as he called them, his heavy attempts at conquest were transferred to the southern states where the patriot defence was weak and the loyalists more numerous.

During the spring and summer of 1778 the greatest preparations had been made in France to increase and equip her navy and put it in condition to meet the wooden walls of England; for it was evident that as between France and England the war would be almost exclusively naval, and that the assistance France would give the American patriots would be almost exclusively naval assistance.

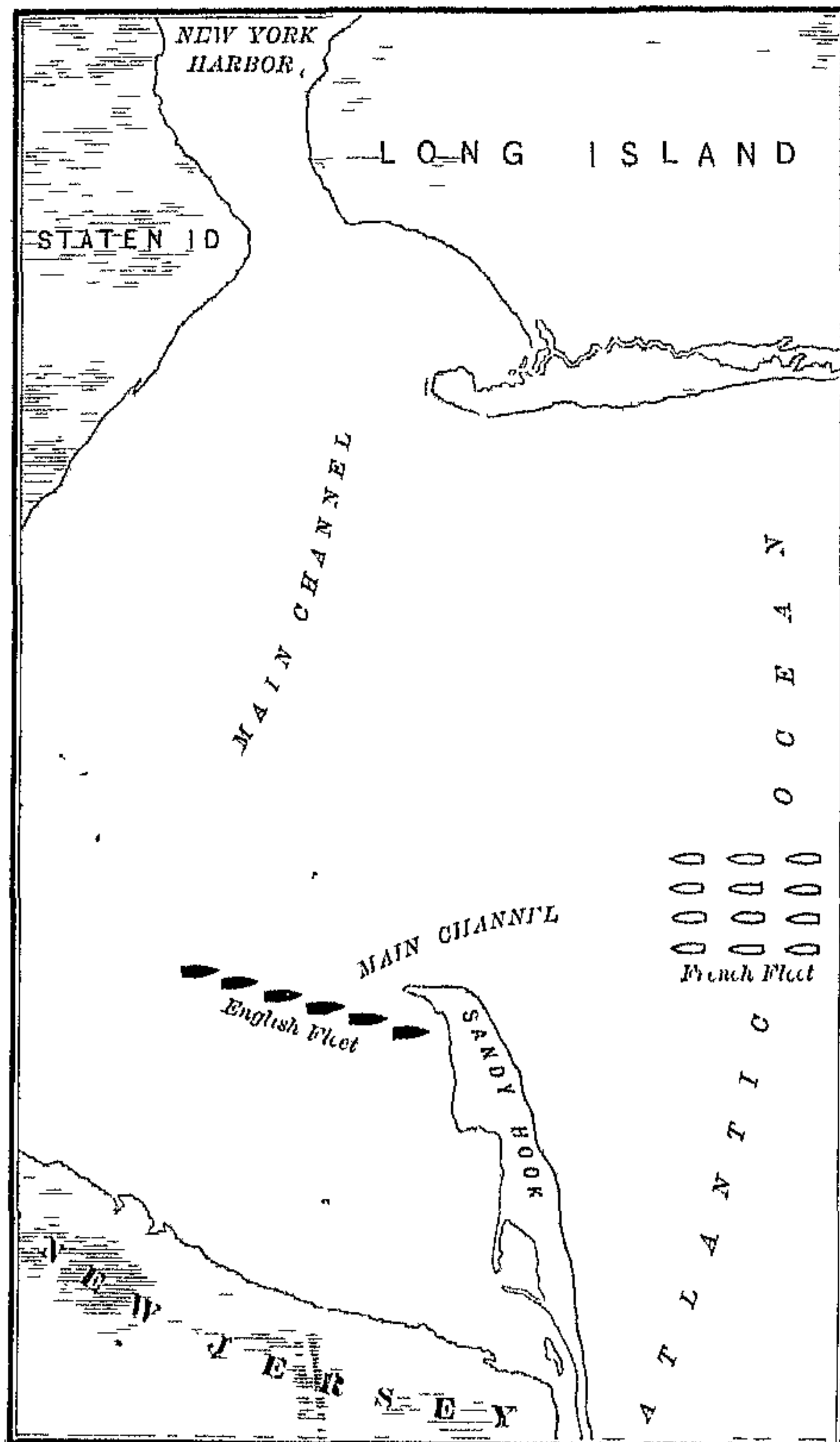
Fleets of war vessels at that time, as Captain Mahan shows us, usually fought in one of three ways. There was the general chase in which one fleet strove to overtake the other and injure the rear vessels; the *mêlée* in which both fleets plunged into the engagement without much direction from the admirals, each captain selecting his opponent; and the formal fleet action laid down in the Fighting Instructions, in which each fleet was stretched out in long line, well under the control of its admiral, and the two gradually came together, van to van, centre to centre, and rear to rear, sailing about parallel so that ship number one in one line would fight number one in the other and so on down the lines in a series of duels.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

This formal fleet action was considered so important that English admirals were compelled by instructions to fight in that way, if they possibly could, and might be cashiered or shot if they failed to do so. It was such a formal and rigid method that it prevented an able admiral from using his judgment or concentrating on a weak spot of his opponent.

A fleet to windward of another, or with the weather gage as it was called, had the advantage of being able to become the attacking party and sail down upon its enemy. But as it sailed down bows on, or nearly so, it could not bring its guns to bear, until it turned into a parallel line with the opposing fleet, while its opponent could use its broadsides for raking. By shooting at its rigging, as it came bows on, the opponent might seriously cripple it and then fall off to leeward and wait until it came on again to repeat the process. The English, being better equipped and more aggressive, usually preferred to have the weather gage and be the attacking party. They also preferred to aim at the hull of an enemy. The French usually aimed at the rigging, and, as they preferred manœuvring and indecisive actions, were well content with the defensive leeward position, which they often made very effective.

Besides the fleet under D'Estaing which came to the American coast in the hope of locking up the British fleet in the Delaware, another fleet under D'Orvilliers cruised in the English Channel and on the 27th of July fought an action with a British fleet under Admiral Keppel, which was regarded as the beginning of this new war between France and England. This engagement, known as the Battle of Ushant, was an instance of the general chase. The French fleet had 27 ships; the English 30. D'Orvilliers was under instructions to fight defensively. Keppel was free to be aggressive. The English were to leeward, but sailed after the French fleet trying to concentrate on its rear, which D'Orvilliers by skilful manœuvring avoided. In the end, after the confusion and darkness of a squall, the two fleets passed each other, going in opposite directions, and exchanging broadsides. The French lost more men; but the



ADMIRAL HOWE'S DEFEAT OF NEW YORK



## FRENCH TO ATTACK NEW YORK

English fleet suffered heavily in rigging. Neither side attempted to renew the action, both claiming victory; but the affair was altogether indecisive.<sup>2</sup>

The French fleet under D'Estaing having failed to prevent Clinton's escape into New York, Washington and D'Estaing thought it might be possible to destroy the British fleet in the harbor of that town. The French fleet might sail into the harbor and at the same time the patriot army might attack on the land side. Washington had great hopes of the success of the plan; for if New York were now taken the result would be even better than if Clinton had been defeated in New Jersey, and would surely end the war. It seemed as if the French fleet had now a grand opportunity to show the value of the alliance with France.

The British in New York fully expected such an attack and made most desperate preparations to defend themselves. The crews of the transports, and the captains, mates and sailors of merchant vessels, volunteered to fight on the men-of-war. So many of the light infantry, grenadiers and even wounded officers on shore, were eager to serve as marines that they had to be selected by lot.

But Admiral Howe had no intention of allowing the French to attack his vessels while in the harbor. He took his ships outside and down to the extreme northern point of Sandy Hook where the main ship channel passed running east and west. By this channel, after they had crossed the bar outside in the ocean, the French fleet must enter. On the extreme end of Sandy Hook Howe erected a battery commanding the narrow channel, and with this battery as his right wing he anchored his ships along the southern edge of the channel. Each vessel had a spring line from her stern to a second anchor, so that when the

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<sup>2</sup> Stedman, "American War," vol. ii, pp. 75-82; Life of Keppel in James' "Naval History;" Captain Mahan's chapter in Clowes, "Royal Navy," vol. iii, pp. 412-426. As this is the first occasion of citing Captain Mahan's fascinating and enlightening writings I must beg leave to express my regret that he so often fails to give the original sources of his information.



## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

French entered from the east, with a flood tide and easterly wind, every English ship could be hauled round to present her broadside to the French coming bows on and incapable of using their guns. If the French survived this raking fire and continued their course, the English ships could swing back so, that their broadsides would bear across the channel.

Admiral Howe, when free from political complications and his desire to compromise with the patriots, was a very capable sea officer, and one of the great admirals of England. It has been usual in our histories to explain that D'Estaing could not attack him and take New York, because the water on the bar, much shoaler it was said than now, would not permit his large war-ships with their heavy ordnance to cross. Enormous sums, it is said, were offered to pilots who would accomplish the task; but all to no purpose; and an examination by one of D'Estaing's officers is said to have confirmed the assertion of the pilots, that there was only twenty-three feet of water on the bar at high tide.

But Captain Mahan assures us that this was a mere excuse and subterfuge; that Howe would never have made such preparations if protected by shoal water; and he cites a letter from Admiral Arbuthnot, a year afterwards, to the effect that at the high tides each month there was generally thirty feet of water on the bar. D'Estaing could easily have crossed, it is supposed, if favored by an easterly wind and a high spring tide, both of which conditions were fulfilled on the 22nd of July. The real reason D'Estaing was unwilling to attack was that the very ably chosen position of Howe had turned the numerically inferior English fleet into a superior.<sup>3</sup>

On that 22nd day of July, with the wind favorable and the water high, D'Estaing sailed as if to enter. Howe fully expected to be attacked, believing that there was plenty of water.

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<sup>3</sup> Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iii, p. 156; Jones, "Revolution in New York," vol. i, p. 274; Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. vii, pp. 101, 104-106, 108, 110, 114; Clowes, "Royal Navy," vol. iii, pp. 309-402.

## THE ATTACK ON NEWPORT

But D'Estaing soon bore off to the southward and afterwards went north to Newport, Rhode Island.

His going to Newport only proved again how unlucky he was; for he was hardly out of sight when British war-ships, which he could easily have captured, sailed safely into the harbor of New York to reinforce Clinton. They were part of Admiral Byron's squadron, which had been separated in a storm, and for some days they kept arriving at New York in such a shattered, dismayed condition and with such sickly, worn-out crews, that they would every one have fallen an easy prey to D'Estaing's fleet or even to two or three of his ships, which he might have left behind. Soon afterwards, there arrived a number of provision ships under convoy, which might also have been taken. But all these sailed safely into New York, where there was great rejoicing over the returning good luck and magic success of the British Empire.

Newport presented a much easier conquest than New York and the attack upon it was to be made simultaneously by land and water. At the first appearance of the French fleet on the 5th of August, the British garrison burned or sunk their five frigates and also their sloops and transports. On the 10th the general attack was to be made by both Americans and French. General Sullivan had nearly 10,000 troops, mostly New England militia, which had volunteered with the greatest enthusiasm. Washington sent on Lafayette with 2000 men, and General Greene was also on hand to assist in this contest on the soil of his native state. Counting the 4000 French troops, the whole attacking force was about 15,000.

Washington had great expectations from this expedition. The British garrison at Newport contained only about 6000 men; and with the patriot and French troops, combined with the French fleet, he believed that the chances were a hundred to one in favor of success. It would give "the finishing blow," he said, "to British pretensions of sovereignty." It would be as good as taking New York; for the British would have to leave New York "as fast as their canvass wings could carry

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

them." Finishing the war by one great stroke was now the prevailing feeling in the patriot mind.<sup>4</sup>

The plan of attack on Newport was for the patriot troops to land on the east side of the island, and the French troops on the west, and join in the centre so as to cut off the garrison on Butts Hill from the town. General Pigot who, with Howe, had led the charge at Bunker Hill, was in command of the British; and foreseeing the intention of his enemies, he withdrew the garrison from Butts Hill and concentrated in the town. Sullivan, thereupon, occupied Butts Hill on the 9th of August, without waiting to carry out the general plan arranged for the 10th.

Unfortunately, however, another piece of bad luck had caused a slight delay of a few days, which marred everything. The fleet had arrived off Newport on the 29th of July. But Sullivan's troops had not all arrived and the general attack had been postponed till the 10th of August to give them time. This was just two or three days too late; for on the 9th, about 2 o'clock in the afternoon, a British fleet of nearly twenty-five sail was seen standing in for Newport, and it anchored off Point Judith, for the night. The next day was the time agreed upon for the French troops to be landed. But D'Estaing, fearing to be attacked at anchor by the British fleet, stood out to sea with all his ships, at 8 o'clock in the morning to fight in the open water. The British, also fearing to be attacked at anchor, hastily cut their cables and went out to fight in the ocean.

This British fleet had been made up by Admiral Howe from his own ships at New York and the crippled ships of Byron's squadron, which were hastily repaired. It was a brilliant stroke of Admiral Howe to come so quickly and boldly, and his promptness had saved Newport. His fleet was superior to D'Estaing's in ships, but not in guns. It has been supposed that D'Estaing's better course would have been to have staid at his anchorage; that Howe dared not attack him

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<sup>4</sup> Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. vii, p. 196.

## A STORM STOPS THE FIGHT

there. But D'Estaing appears to have thought that he had no choice but to go out to sea, that if he had allowed himself to be attacked at anchor, he would have been at great disadvantage, assailed at the same time by the land batteries and a fleet provided with fire-ships.

When he sailed out he had the weather gage, that is to say, he was to the windward of the British fleet, which gave him such advantage that Howe dared not attack. All the rest of the day Howe manœuvred with all his skill to win the weather gage and D'Estaing manœuvred to preserve it. The next day these manœuvres were continued until, just about the time some more of Admiral Byron's squadron accidentally arrived and reinforced Howe, a terrific gale amounting almost to a tornado arose and blew for forty-eight hours, scattering both the fleets over the ocean.<sup>5</sup>

When the gale subsided, several of the ships met and fought indecisive actions. The "Dawson" met D'Estaing's flag-ship, the "Languedoc," dismasted and with her rudder broken, fired a few shots at her and sailed away. The "Preston" met the "Tonant" and fought until night ended the engagement. The "Isis" and the French ship "Cæsar," neither of which had suffered in the storm, fought hotly almost side by side for an hour and a half, when the captain of the "Cæsar" having lost his arm, abandoned the fight and the "Isis" was too much crippled to follow.

But the general result of the whole affair was that the two fleets were scattered along the coast of New England and some of the British vessels are supposed to have been driven as far south as Virginia. The British returned to New York to refit; some of the French are said to have refitted in the

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<sup>5</sup> "Memoirs and Correspondence of Lafayette," London edition, 1837, vol. i, p. 57; Pontgibaud, "A French Volunteer of the War of Independence," p. 68; Gordon, "American Revolution," édition 1788, vol. iii, p. 159; Jones, "New York in the Revolution," vol. i, p. 276; Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. vii, pp. 128 note, 154 note; Stedman, "American War," vol. ii, pp. 27-31; Johnson, "Life of Greene," vol. i, p. 109.



## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

Delaware; but all the French vessels, except the "Cæsar," which went to Boston, appear to have returned to Newport on the 20th of August.

Sullivan's troops at Butts Hill had suffered severely in the gale which swept down their tents, damaged the powder, drowned horses and men and reduced the whole camp to such a weak condition that they fully expected to be attacked and cut to pieces by Pigot. But by the 20th of August, when the French fleet returned, they had restored themselves to war-like condition, and moved down within two miles of the British at Newport to begin a regular siege, and they now demanded that D'Estaing should fulfil his promise of assisting them.

General Greene and Lafayette went on board the flag-ship to consult with him. But to their great disgust they found that, while he was entirely willing, his captains had refused and had entered a formal protest against the attack. The cause of this extraordinary conduct is said to have been that D'Estaing was a military officer and the captains being sailors thwarted all his purposes and were determined that he should not win distinction. The navies of Europe grew out of the armies, were at first officered in the higher grades by military men and the remains of this system were still lingering in France. The French navy was at that time officered exclusively from the old aristocracy and a pedigree was required for admission. The captains had taken refuge in D'Estaing's instructions which read that, in case of misfortune or a superior English fleet on the coast, he should go to Boston; and to Boston the captains now took him in spite of his willingness to take Newport.

Sullivan and his officers naturally asked themselves of what use was the French alliance to America if the French fleet sent to our coast would not fight. They sent to D'Estaing a formal protest against this abandonment as derogatory to the honor of France, destructive to the welfare of the United States and highly injurious to the alliance. The patriot army,



## THE BOSTON STREET FIGHT

they said, might now be isolated on Newport Island and captured.

D'Estaing was offended at the protest and sailed away the same day for Boston, where he protected his fleet by land batteries on the shore, while Sullivan in his usual hot, hasty manner, issued general orders, commenting bluntly on the French, and intimating that America would now take care of herself without the assistance of her allies.

D'Estaing afterwards put forward plenty of excuses about the difficulty of obtaining water and provisions, necessity of refitting his ships and the danger of Howe coming back with a superior force. But nothing could prevent a clamor all through New England against the "shameful desertion" of the French. Severe letters were sent to Boston, where the people were inclined to refuse the French admission to the harbor, and such a feeling was created that it was feared it might endanger the alliance.

A street fight with French sailors in Boston, amounting almost to a riot, in which a French officer was killed, and another wounded, was very likely due to this feeling; and there was a similar disturbance in Charleston, South Carolina. The cooler heads among the patriots and the French officers did everything to smooth over the difficulty. The Congress directed that the protest sent to D'Estaing be kept secret, and never published. Washington urged officers to say in public that the retirement of the French fleet to Boston was an act of necessity. The unfortunate Boston street fight was charged upon captured British sailors and some of Burgoyne's surrendered troops. The Massachusetts legislature voted a monument to the French officer who was killed; and an exchange of public dinners between the French officers and the legislature was arranged.

D'Estaing made the greatest effort to restore the former friendliness; and finally offered to go in person at the head of a regiment and serve under General Sullivan as he had formerly served under Marshal Saxe in the war which terminated in 1748.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

"I should not have taken this step," he said, "with the idea of strengthening an army with such a handful of men, nor proving what is already known, that the French nation can sacrifice life with a good grace; but I was anxious to demonstrate that my countrymen could not be offended by a sudden expression of feeling, and that he, who had the honor of commanding them in America, was and would be at all times one of the most devoted and zealous servants of the United States." (Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. vii, p. 182 note.)

To the French Admiral Washington wrote letters of such finished courtesy and good feeling that one might suppose him to have been born in France. But, in spite of all this, there was an unpleasant under-current; the French officers noticed a certain coolness towards them which may have been an additional reason for their commander taking his fleet to the West Indies as soon as it was repaired. Those islands constituted the weak point of France, the point England would attack; and Clinton had intended to blockade D'Estaing in Boston harbor so that he could not reach them.<sup>o</sup>

Meantime, Sullivan's army continued to desert and he and Greene were at their wits' end to save the remainder; for Clinton or Admiral Howe with a heavy force might now arrive at any moment. They accordingly removed from the island all their baggage and heavy artillery by the 26th of August, and on the night of the 28th took their whole army back to Butts Hill, where they were close to communication with the main-land and could escape at any time. Early the next morning, they found that Pigot had followed them, and a severe action was fought all day, with no result.

The next morning Sullivan was informed that a fleet under Admiral Howe had been sighted off Block Island. There

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<sup>o</sup> Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iii, pp. 165-169, 197, 198, 200; "Memoirs and Correspondence of Lafayette," London edition, 1837, vol. i, pp. 58, 59, 60; Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. vii, 160-164, 166, 168-175, 180, 182 note; New York Historical Society Collections, 1873, vol. iii, pp. 234, 254; Stedman, "American War," vol. ii, pp. 38, 46, 47; Pontgibaud, "A French Volunteer in the War of Independence," p. 68; Jones, "New York in the Revolution," vol. i, p. 277; Johnson, "Life of Greene," vol. i, pp. 108-125.

## A SUCCESSFUL RETREAT

was no hope of D'Estaing returning from Boston in time to check this fleet; and there was nothing to be done but retreat to the main-land. Sullivan put a bold front on it. He pitched tents in an advanced position and employed nearly his whole force in fortifying while his stores and baggage were carried over to the main-land, and at night under cover of the darkness his whole army was withdrawn from its advanced position and left the island.

The success of the retreat was much admired, and it resembled the one made by Washington after the Battle of Long Island. Sullivan took away all his men and baggage without the slightest loss. Lafayette had been to Boston, in the vain attempt to persuade D'Estaing to hurry back to Newport, and he returned just in time to conduct the last of the retreat, bringing off the pickets and last of the troops with characteristic pains and carefulness.

## LXXIV.

### CLINTON RAIDS THE NORTH AND STRIKES HEAVILY IN THE FRENCH WEST INDIES

WASHINGTON, with his headquarters at White Plains, had part of his troops protecting West Point on the Hudson and others extended eastward from White Plains towards Boston. He was thus ready to march to Boston and help relieve the French fleet if, as he expected, it should be attacked by the British.

Ever since the evacuation of Philadelphia, the patriots had felt considerable confidence that England would now have to withdraw her troops from the American continent and concentrate them in the West Indies in order to protect her valuable islands from the French. She must either give up the continent or the islands. It would be impossible for her to hold both; and for many months Washington had been expecting to hear of the evacuation of New York, which would give the patriot army a chance to invade Canada and add a new state to the Union.

But the preparations in New York which seemed like evacuation, were merely preparations to send part of Clinton's troops to reinforce the English West Indies. Clinton had no idea of giving up the continent. The fleet, which had been reported to Sullivan as off Block Island, had Clinton himself on board with 4,000 troops, with which he intended to annihilate the patriots at Newport. But having missed his prey, he bore away for Boston, where finding the French fleet securely protected in the harbor by land batteries, he sailed back into Long Island Sound. When off New London he directed the fleet and troops to go back to New Bedford,

## CLINTON'S FIRST RAID

Massachusetts, and destroy its privateers and other shipping while he himself returned in one of the ships to New York.<sup>1</sup>

This attack on New Bedford, on the 5th of September, was the beginning of Clinton's raiding policy. General Grey of no-flint fame was in command and it was congenial work for him. He destroyed over seventy large vessels besides small craft, burnt the magazines, wharfs, stores, warehouses, ship-yards, together with mills and a considerable number of dwelling houses. He then went to Martha's Vineyard, Nantucket and the Elizabeth Islands, where he destroyed vessels, seized the militia arms, compelled a payment of public money, and took 300 oxen and 10,000 sheep, which were sent to the army at New York.<sup>2</sup>

The principle underlying all of Clinton's raids, was that they should strike at the most prosperous parts of the country, where there was long established trade and wealth and a conservative, well-settled people, who would thus become disgusted with a patriot cause that could not protect their property.

The old shipping and whaling interest, together with the new privateering interest of New Bedford, were well selected; and it was this sort of thing which in the beginning of the war had been so much dreaded by the patriots. It had seemed that England's command of the sea gave her unlimited power to lay waste every spot of ground near navigable water in America. A sudden raid, like this on New Bedford, was quickly and easily accomplished by the fleet with troops who could do their work and escape before any patriot force could be summoned to oppose them. If such a policy had been rigorously carried out from the beginning it is difficult to see how the patriot cause could have survived.

A few weeks after the return of the troops and ships from New Bedford, Clinton planned another raid to Egg Harbor

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<sup>1</sup> Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iii, p. 169; Jones, "New York in the Revolution," vol. i, p. 278; Stedman, "American War," vol. ii, p. 32.

<sup>2</sup> Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iii, p. 169; Stedman, "American War," vol. ii, pp. 39, 44.



## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

and the Mullica River in the neighborhood of what is now Tuckerton on the coast of New Jersey. This inlet from the sea at Egg Harbor had become of considerable importance during the last few years and was the resort of numerous American privateers and trading vessels, which could not enter either the Delaware or New York harbor, where the British war-ships were in control. The cargoes of patriot merchant vessels could be taken to Egg Harbor and up the Mullica River, and thence distributed by wagons to different parts of the country. The privateers found the inlet an excellent place of refuge as well as a good point from which to watch for British merchant vessels bound to New York. Admiral Howe had never interfered with Egg Harbor, never attacked or blockaded it as one would suppose he could easily have done, and he allowed the patriots to develop its advantages as they pleased.

When Clinton decided in September to break it up, he first sent an expedition up the Hudson for the double purpose, as is supposed, of collecting forage and masking his intention at Egg Harbor. This Hudson expedition consisted of two columns, one under Knyphausen going up the east side of the river, and another under Cornwallis going up the west side, with galleys, frigates and armed vessels following in the river so that each column was ready to support the other by crossing the river in boats.

It was a powerful expedition, and made a clean sweep of both sides of the Hudson. Washington's main force kept close in its intrenchments in the Highlands; but some troops were sent out under General Wynd to annoy the British on the west side, and Wynd had under him a very popular young Virginian of good estate, Colonel Baylor, in command of some light cavalry.

On the night of the 27th of September, Baylor and his men lay asleep in a barn near Old Tappan at some distance from Wynd, and rather too near the force of Cornwallis, who determined to capture both Wynd's and Baylor's commands. Some deserters from the British informed Wynd in time for

## MASSACRE AT TAPPAN

his men to escape; but No-Flint Grey succeeded in making a complete surprise and capture of Baylor's sleeping force. Grey again adopted his Paoli tactics, ordered his men to draw their loads and flints from their guns, and instructed them to give no quarter. Sixty-seven of Baylor's unarmed and sleeping men were cut down and stabbed as soon as they awoke, and the remaining forty odd were taken alive only because one of Grey's captains was unwilling to carry out the order to show no quarter.

An investigation by Congress led to protests and a controversy with Great Britain, without, of course, any results. But the affair was kept alive in patriot memory as a new atrocity of the enemy, and vengeance taken by increased severity to the loyalists.<sup>3</sup>

About a week after the massacre at Old Tappan, Captain Ferguson with 300 troops arrived off the inlet at Egg Harbor. Ferguson, who afterwards became prominent in the South, was a Scotchman, the nephew of Dr. Adam Ferguson, who came out with the peace commission of 1778. He had interested himself in introducing the rifle, and is said to have invented a breech-loader. He had the reputation of being a good marksman and had given exhibitions of his skill in England, firing his rifle six times in a minute, and hitting the target while lying on his back, with other remarkable performances. His right arm had been shattered at the Battle of the Brandywine, and he boasted that at that battle he had had a chance to shoot Washington, but had refrained.<sup>4</sup>

His raid on Egg Harbor was most successful. He penetrated up the Mullica River for twenty miles to Chestnut Neck, burning ten large vessels, chiefly prizes, which had tried to escape. Some of the privateers and smaller vessels got farther up the river and were safe. But Ferguson burned all the

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<sup>3</sup> Stryker, "The Massacre at Old Tappan;" Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iii, p. 194; Jones, "New York in the Revolution," vol. i, p. 285; Stedman, "American War," vol. ii, p. 41.

<sup>4</sup> Draper, "King's Mountain and Its Heroes," pp. 48-67.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

storehouses and yards for fitting out privateers, and destroyed the houses of prominent patriots.

A small patriot force, known as Pulaski's Legion, had been sent to check Ferguson, and was encamped near the mouth of the Mullica River. When Ferguson had returned to his ships at the inlet some deserters from the patriots informed him of the careless manner in which Pulaski was encamped. Ferguson immediately organized a night expedition which led by the deserters fell upon Pulaski's infantry in the darkness. There was another tale of prisoner killing, which might have been worse if Pulaski had not been able to bring his cavalry to the rescue, and force the British to retreat to their boats.<sup>5</sup>

These expeditions up the Hudson and to Egg Harbor inflicted heavy loss upon the country, not merely in the burning and destruction of ships, houses and stores, but in the enormous quantities of forage, and droves of cattle, horses, and sheep, which were taken on both sides of the Hudson and carried down to New York for the British army. The loyalists complained that this plunder was taken too indiscriminately, and that they were compelled to suffer almost as much as the patriots.

At the same time another raid was conducted by Tryon through Long Island, which was largely loyalist, except at its extreme eastern end, where there were many patriots employed in grazing large stocks of cattle. From these patriots, Tryon collected a great drove of cattle, with which he returned to New York in safety; but not, it is said, before his troops had done much damage to the loyalists and robbed the farm of

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<sup>5</sup> Stryker, "The Affair at Egg Harbor;" Stedman, "American War," vol. ii, pp. 43-46; Jones, "New York in the Revolution," vol. i, p. 287; Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iii, pp. 195, 196; Draper, "King's Mountain and Its Heroes," pp. 56, 61 note. For some other instances of prisoner-killing see *Magazine of American History*, vol. xi, p. 275 note; "Memoirs and Correspondence of Lafayette," London edition, 1837, vol. i, pp. 31, 32.

## CLINTON'S SUCCESS

Colonel Floyd while Tryon and his officers were dining with its owner.<sup>6</sup>

These raids completed Clinton's work in the North, for the autumn of 1778; and very successful work it was. He had defeated every operation of the French fleet and reduced it to a nullity so far as aid to the patriots was concerned. He had intended to lock up the French fleet in Boston harbor and prevent it going to the protection of the French West Indies. But Admiral Byron's ships, with which he intended to accomplish this brilliant stroke, were so shattered by successive storms that they could accomplish nothing and the last storm drove them from the entrance of Boston Bay.<sup>7</sup> Clinton had nevertheless struck heavy blows at patriot property, sweeping in enormous supplies of provisions, forage and cattle. He had reduced the northern patriots from a feeling of great hopefulness to a state of great despondency; and he had had the satisfaction of seeing them quarrel with their allies the French.

For the coming winter months, when campaigning would be difficult in the North, he and the Ministry had planned great things for the southern states, and the West Indies. General Grant sailed with a squadron of ships under Commodore Hotham and 5000 troops, to attack the French islands; and this expedition sailed from New York on the 3rd of November, the same day that the French fleet left Boston for the West Indies.

Clinton also sent 3000 troops to Florida. He had already sent 700 to Halifax, and 300 to Bermuda, and all these detachments weakened his New York force by about 9000 men. The patriots still believed that he would before long evacuate the continent and concentrate in the West Indies; and it was not until February that they gave up all hope of this happy result.<sup>8</sup>

It was by no means an unwarranted supposition. Eng-

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<sup>6</sup> Jones, "New York in the Revolution," vol. i, pp. 287, 288.

<sup>7</sup> Stedman, "American War," vol. ii, pp. 46, 47.

<sup>8</sup> Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. vii, pp. 213, 214, 220, 239, 184, 191, 196, 208, 212, 220, 237, 250, 207, 318, 319, 304, 305. See also pp. 23, 29, 40, 133, 136.



## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

land's military and naval forces must now be scattered all over the world to resist the attacks of France in India and in the West Indies, and protect England herself from invasion. She could spare Clinton, as he bitterly complained, only one-third of the force she had allowed Howe. And Tarleton, in his narrative of the war, speaks of some military men as opposed to this wide dispersion of forces, presenting a comparatively weak defence at every point. They suggested that the force in the rebellious colonies be withdrawn, and concentrated on crushing France in her most vulnerable point, the West Indies. This policy is said to have been recommended to the Ministry by Lord Amhurst, on the principle that if France were completely crushed by the whole concentrated energy of Great Britain the patriot party in America could be easily tired out and the peaceful surrender of the colonies would soon follow as a matter of course.<sup>9</sup>

England had three groups of valuable possessions, India, the West Indies and America. It might be well, it was said, to let go of one of them in order to save the other two. But the plan adopted was to keep up the war at every point, in India, the West Indies, the rebellious colonies and on the ocean. The American patriots evidently could not take either New York, Canada or Newport, and the French seemed equally incapable in regard to those places. Predatory expeditions could be sent out from New York, inflict great damage and safely return. British wealth and resources could keep this method going for years, and it would eventually bring about a compromise or wear out the patriots, whose numbers were few and their resources limited. A patriot army, like Washington's, living from hand to mouth, with no power to punish desertion or compel enlistments, could not, in the long run, endure the steady grinding process of a regular military establishment backed by a rich nation willing to stand out to the end.

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<sup>9</sup>Tarleton's Narrative, p. 2; Bancroft, "History of the United States," of 1886, vol. v, p. 282.







## GRANT IN THE WEST INDIES

A British squadron under Commodore Evans had already, in September, 1778, taken the two little islands which the French always used for curing their fish near Newfoundland, St. Pierre and Miquelon, and sent the whole population to France. This destroyed the French Newfoundland fishery. But there was compensation for it to the French nation when in the same month the French governor of Martinique in the West Indies took without difficulty or resistance the English island of Dominica, an important stronghold which gave the French four consecutive islands from north to south, Guadeloupe, Dominica, Martinique and St. Lucia.

Although General Grant had sailed from New York for the West Indies on the same day that D'Estaing had sailed for the same destination from Boston, neither knew of the starting of the other; and, no doubt, Grant thought that he had a good chance to carry his transports safe to the West Indies while D'Estaing was occupied at Boston or on the New England coast. As a matter of fact, however, the two fleets sailed to the West Indies not far apart, and a stray brig from the English fleet was taken by the French. Grant's troops on the transports were saved from the French by a severe storm which scattered both fleets. The English ships were the first to come together, and reached Barbadoes on the 10th of December.

Immediately on their arrival an expedition against the French island of St. Lucia was planned, and started within two days under the command of General Meadows, who effected a landing. He had partly reduced the French forts and garrisons, when D'Estaing's large fleet with its powerful land force appeared in sight.

Again D'Estaing was too late, and by the most extraordinary bad luck, his whole object in coming to the West Indies was frustrated. When he left Boston he had had no idea that a British force would leave New York at the same time, and he had expected to find the British islands of Barbadoes, Granada and St. Vincent so unprotected that their surrender would be little more than a formal ceremony. What was his surprise then to find Barbadoes held by troops and ships, and a

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

detachment from these troops engaged in capturing the French island of St. Lucia. If he had been a day sooner he might have caught the troops of General Meadows in an awkward position just as they had landed on St. Lucia. But now they had more than half possession of the island and could defend the harbor with the war-ships that had brought them.

D'Estaing bombarded the war-ships to no purpose, and then landed his troops to seize a height which would command the harbor only to find this height already occupied by the British. In desperation he drew out 5000 of his best troops to attack the main lines of General Meadows, and made three gallant charges, each of which was repulsed with heavy loss. Four hundred were killed and over a thousand wounded; and these casualties amounted to more, it is said, than the number of English defending the trenches.<sup>10</sup>

D'Estaing had evidently been born under an unlucky star. He excelled only in arriving too late and always doing the wrong thing. He had lost an important island; for St. Lucia served the English as a naval base from which to watch the French for the rest of the war. The West Indies were then one of the richest commercial regions of the world and in this respect almost rivalled India. It would ruin France to lose her hold there; and the acquisitions of new islands would enrich England.

Washington tried to comfort D'Estaing by saying that he had never known so deserving a man have so many misfortunes. His misfortunes had thus far greatly increased the strength of Great Britain in North America and in the West Indies. Clinton, on the other hand, was not only prompt and judicious in all his movements, but supremely fortunate beyond even his expectations and intentions. He and the Ministry were making war in earnest and the patriots were amazed at the result of the French alliance.

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<sup>10</sup> *Annual Register*, 1779, chaps. iii, x; Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iii, pp. 242-247; Stedman, "American War," vol. ii, pp. 83-91; Clowes, "Royal Navy," iii, pp. 427-432.

## GLOOMY PROSPECTS

Washington's letters became gloomy. He visited Congress and described the patriot cause as in a "ruinous and deplorable condition." It is no longer a question, he says, whether Great Britain can carry on the war, but "can we carry it on much longer?" The people and the army appeared to grow daily more tired of the contest. The depreciation of the currency increased, and as he put it "a rat in the shape of a horse is not to be bought at this time for less than £200."<sup>11</sup>

The French fleets had abandoned their own coast and French commerce had become the prey of British cruisers. In India the English had seized the opportunity of attacking the French stronghold at Pondicherry, and had taken it, together with the French settlements and factories at Chandénagor, Yaman, and Karical. This left to France very little hope of controlling India and sharing in the vast wealth of plunder in that wondrous country, out of whose hoarded treasures England has grown to power and greatness. Thus instead of being injured by our alliance with France England had in the very first year of it reaped an enormous advantage. She could well afford to abandon all her American colonies if she gained exclusive control in India. Our alliance with France seemed to be ruining our good friend without assisting the patriot cause. Turgot's doubts about the wisdom of the alliance seemed in a measure to be justified. Was it worth while for France to lose all her hold on India, besides other losses, merely for the sake of avenging the loss of Canada and breaking up the union of the Anglo-Saxon race?<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. vii, pp. 208, 209, 210, 220, 243, 297, 301.

<sup>12</sup> Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iii, pp. 230, 252; *Annual Register*, 1770, chap. ix; Stedman, "American War," vol. ii, p. 82.



## LXXV.

### GEORGIA SUBJUGATED AND PROCLAIMED A BRITISH COLONY

IN addition to his expeditions against the French West Indies, Clinton prepared to carry on active campaigning in the southern states, where the climate would be in his favor during the winter. This plan of transferring the war to the South in winter was a most obvious and natural one, which Washington had always expected Howe to carry out.<sup>1</sup>

Nothing better shows the uselessness of the long periods of quiescence from December to June of Howe's great army, and the absurdity of the excuses he gave for it, than the activity and success of Clinton with a much smaller army during the first winter of his command.

He selected Georgia as the best place in which to begin his southern conquest as it was the weakest and easiest to take. A combined movement upon it was planned almost immediately after Grant sailed for the West Indies. General Prevost, who commanded in East Florida, a strongly loyalist province, was to attack Georgia from the south at the same time that a fleet and army from New York supported him by attacking Savannah. On the west Clinton had arranged that the Indian tribes from Detroit and the Great Lakes, all down the Mississippi Valley to Georgia, should be aroused and thrown against the southern seaboard colonies.

It was similar to his Indian plan in 1776, when he and Sir Peter Parker tried to take Charleston. But the Indians again failed him. He had relied on Henry Hamilton, the governor at Detroit, to start southward with his Indians through the Ohio Valley and join the southern tribes. Hamilton had pro-

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<sup>1</sup> Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. v, pp. 4, 5.

## THE ATTACK ON GEORGIA

ceeded as far as Vincennes on the Wabash; but, as we have already related, his whole force was surprised and taken by the patriot guardian of that region, George Rogers Clark, and his riflemen.<sup>2</sup>

The other expeditions against Georgia were more successful. The preliminary raid from loyal East Florida was composed of two armed bodies made up of regulars and loyalists. One party came up in boats through the sounds along the coast and demanded the surrender of Sunbury, which being refused, they returned. The other party marched inland towards Savannah, skirmishing with about a hundred patriot militia. The patriot, General Scriven, was wounded in one of the engagements and while lying on the ground was shot by several of the British, the first of the atrocities of this kind, which soon desolated the whole southern country.

The raiders got as far as Ogeechee Ferry, where a planter's slaves had erected intrenchments held by Colonel Elbert and 200 patriots. This stopped the raiders, who returned to Florida, desolating the country as they passed through it, burning houses, rice and grain and carrying off the horses, cattle and negroes.

The regular expedition from New York started on the 27th of November in command of Colonel Campbell with 2500 Hessians and British troops in transports, convoyed by a small squadron, all of which could have been prevented if the French fleet had remained on the coast. But with that fleet in the West Indies, Clinton could do as he pleased on the water.

On the 29th of December, Campbell effected a landing near Savannah, where a narrow causeway leading through a rice swamp gave him access to the town. The causeway was occupied by General Robert Howe with his 820 militia in a strong

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<sup>2</sup> English, "The Conquest of the North West," vol. i, chaps. 10 and 11; Kirk, "Rear Guard of the Revolution," pp. 159-177; Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iii, p. 261; Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. 8, pp. 4-6, 121, 122 note; Illinois State Historical Library Collections, vol. i, pp. 171-289.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

position. But he had neglected to protect a by-path which led round through the swamp to his rear; and the British threatened his front while they sent a force around by the path which almost entrapped him. He escaped just as the British were about to surround him.

Shortly afterward, Savannah with all its supplies, cannon, shipping and over 400 militia was in the possession of the English, who, in pursuing their enemy through the streets, bayoneted some of the unarmed inhabitants, and drove the remains of the militia to take refuge in South Carolina.

Meantime General Prevost, coming up through the sounds from East Florida, had taken Sunbury with its 200 patriot defenders, and reaching Savannah outranked Campbell and took command of Georgia. The loyalists came in and submitted and many patriots fled westward and northward. This conquest of Georgia was a great surprise to the southern patriot party, who, so far from expecting anything of the kind, had been preparing to capture East Florida, which seemed an easy prey. With this end in view, the South Carolina delegates in the Congress had, in September, persuaded that body to send General Lincoln to Charleston to take command of all the southern patriot militia and descend upon Florida.

Lincoln reached Charleston only a few days after the British expedition started from New York. He collected troops from the two Carolinas and with some 950 men marched southward in time only to meet the fugitive Georgia militia retreating from the British, who had taken Savannah. He now found, to his great disappointment, that the patriot party was extremely weak and the number of men who would take the field was exceedingly few.

He had been led to expect a grand army of 7000 men. But, with the greatest exertions during the month of January, 1779, and the assistance of General Ashe of North Carolina, and other local leaders, he found himself with less than 3000 and these more unmanageable and independent than the northern militia under Washington. When ordered to march they refused obedience until they had obtained satisfactory answers

## CONQUEST OF GEORGIA

to their questions, "Where are we going, and how long are we to stay?"<sup>3</sup>

The British were able to take complete possession of Georgia at their ease; and besides Savannah, they established posts to control the central and western parts of the state at Ebenezer and Augusta. Oaths of allegiance to the king were administered all over the state, the old colonial government was restored, the courts of justice opened, an assembly called and all the necessary officers from a governor down to a petty constable appointed under royal authority. Great Britain had actually conquered one of her old American colonies and reduced it apparently to complete submission.

The question then arose whether the conquest could be extended into South Carolina and at first the English were unsuccessful. A detachment of 200 which attempted to take Port Royal in that state, were beaten back by General Moultrie, who had defended Charleston from Clinton and Sir Peter Parker in June, 1776. A body of South Carolina loyalists who marched to join the British at Augusta were pursued by Colonel Pickens across the Savannah River, and cut to pieces in a decisive engagement. Seventy of the prisoners were tried and convicted of treason to the state and five of the prominent ones executed, which, of course, encouraged the hatred, reprisals and murders between patriot and loyalist which had already begun.

The struggle was now for the control of the Savannah River, the boundary between Georgia and South Carolina. If it were held by the British they could then continue their control of Georgia and possibly enter South Carolina. Lincoln began establishing posts along the river and sent General Ashe with 1500 troops to a point opposite Augusta which was immediately abandoned by Campbell, who supposed the American force much larger than it was. Ashe followed

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<sup>3</sup> Stedman, "American War," vol. ii, pp. 66-72, 103; Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iii, p. 229; Jones, "New York in the Revolution," vol. i, pp. 289, 290; Lee, Memoirs, vol. i, p. 69.



## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

Campbell down the river, but at Briar Creek on the 2d of March was suddenly surprised and completely routed by General Prevost, who had made a circuitous march of 50 miles to get in his rear. More than 160 Americans were captured, 150 killed, and the rest drowned or scattered through the country.

This disaster settled the question of the Savannah River, and gave the British complete control of Georgia with means of communicating with the loyalists and Indians of the Carolinas.

The South Carolina patriots now made vigorous efforts to protect their state. The militia were collected at Orangeburg; raiders were sent into Georgia to destroy indiscriminately provisions, cattle and wagons that might sustain and aid the enemy; and in these matters the patriot governor, John Rutledge, acted without consulting General Lincoln, who represented the Congress.

In April, Lincoln started to invade Georgia, cut off the communications of the British with the western part of the country, and confine them closely to the seaboard. But no sooner was he well on his way up the Savannah River, than General Prevost, taking advantage of his absence, made a dash at Charleston, driving Moultrie before him, and plundering and devastating the country. He arrived before Charleston on the 11th of May, but a delay of two or three days in his progress had given time for Moultrie and the governor to make unusual exertions. Militia from all over the state had hurried into the town by forced marches. Entrenchments of earth and fallen trees were stretched across the land side of the town, with lighted tar barrels burning all night to prevent a sudden surprise, and 3300 militia collected behind them.

The governor and patriot civil authorities then offered to make with Prevost a curious sort of treaty, which shows a certain independence of the rest of the country, that has frequently cropped out in the South Carolina character. If the British army would withdraw, South Carolina would agree to remain neutral during the rest of the war and then accept whatever fate had befallen her neighboring states. If Prevost had accepted this offer it might, as Harry Lee said, have dis-



## PREVOST'S MISTAKE

armed South Carolina during the remainder of the Revolution, settled the fate of North Carolina and Georgia and "with the allurements of British commerce would probably have woven a connection with Great Britain, fatal in its consequences to the independence of the southern states." But that good fortune which was so conspicuous in the Revolution again attended on our side. Prevost stupidly declined this offer to put South Carolina, and possibly the whole South, out of the patriot union, giving as his reason his lack of authority to accept anything but a military surrender.<sup>4</sup>

Having missed his chance, and learning that Lincoln was hurrying back and might attack his rear, he abandoned the siege, and retreated thirty miles from Charleston to Stono Ferry, near the coast. He remained there until the 20th of June, when he was attacked by Lincoln's army, and fought a battle of some severity. Lincoln's loss in killed and wounded was considerable, and the attack failed. The British returned to Georgia, carrying with them it is said 3000 slaves and considerable silver plate from the rich planters' houses, together with money, jewelry and other plunder. The slaves were sold by the officers in the West Indies and netted them a neat sum, as their share of the spoil.

But all this plunder, it is said, was small compared with the devastation and destruction they committed under the new method of war Clinton had adopted, and which his generals in the South carried out to the letter by sending out small parties on every side, spreading the depredations as far as possible, burning houses, crops, food supplies of every kind, slaughtering cattle, horses and even dogs, and creating such a desert that a thousand slaves, it is said, besides those carried off, were scattered in the woods and swamps and died of famine.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Lee, *Memoirs*, vol. i, pp. 85, 86; Jones, "New York in the Revolution," vol. i, p. 290 note.

<sup>5</sup> Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iii, pp. 253-260; Cobbett, "Parliamentary History," vol. xx, p. 839; Lee, *Memoirs*, vol. i, p. 90; Stedman, "American War," vol. ii, pp. 103-120.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

All this success in the West Indies and the South brought new hope and confidence to the people of England. Parliament and London society felt relieved and began to wonder how they could have been so absurd as to think that France could do anything for the rebels. What a funk they had been in over it, and what unnecessary humiliation to hurry out that undignified peace commission with extravagant offers to repeal acts of Parliament and give more liberty to colonists. In Parliament, Georgia was declared to be out of the revolt, and in the peace of the King. One colony had been saved, which was more than Howe had accomplished with a huge army and three years of war.

The loyalists plucked up courage; and many patriots were becoming heartily sick of the renewed hopelessness of their cause, the anarchy, confusion, and lawlessness in the country, the depreciated paper money, the stagnation and ruin of all legitimate business, the weakness and inefficiency of the Congress as a governing body, the selfishness and supposed corruption of many of its members, the danger that the country, unable to govern itself, would fall into the hands of France.

As a natural consequence of this condition, the extreme patriots became more desperate and determined than ever and their hatred of the loyalists increased, until they hesitated at scarcely any measure of punishment and repression. It is in this period that the severest treatment of the loyalists began, their total disfranchisement, deprivation of the right to sue in the courts, collect debts, be executor or guardian, buy or sell land, execute a valid will, practice a profession or hold any office of trust or profit; and this treatment was continued with increasing severity even after the Revolution was supposed to have been ended by the treaty of peace.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Flick, "Loyalism in New York;" Van Tyne, "Loyalists of the American Revolution," pp. 190-200.

## LXXVI.

### CLINTON RAIDS VIRGINIA AND CONNECTICUT

DURING the winter, Washington consulted with the Congress as to what could be done during the coming summer of 1779 and the conclusion was that it would not be well to attempt anything except hold the Hudson Highlands and punish the Indians who had conducted the massacres in Wyoming and Cherry Valley. The British forces in New York and Newport were too strong to be attacked; and Canada could not be invaded. "Our resources of men," said Washington, "I believe rather decrease." The difficulty of feeding even a small army in the exhausted state of the country, was becoming greater than ever. The officers were so disgusted with their situation, that Washington felt obliged to warn Congress that a dissolution of the army was not an improbable event. His advice was to pass the coming year in comparative inactivity; wait, rest and let the patriot resources recuperate.<sup>1</sup>

Indeed, nothing else could be done. An extraordinary lethargy had seized the patriot party. Washington had feared this as a result of the French alliance, and several of his letters at that time reminded the party that they must continue to rely on themselves, and not leave everything to France. But the lethargy was not merely due to the belief that the struggle was now transferred to the West Indies. The wearing out process of the war had begun to tell and the high enthusiasm of the first years was exhausted. In March the state of affairs grew worse.

"I have seen, without despondency, even for a moment, the hours which America has styled her gloomy ones; but I have beheld no day since

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<sup>1</sup> Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. vii, pp. 6, 319-320, 320, 435, 448 note, 450, 456, 460, 505; vol. 8, pp. 138, 145, 146-250; Bolton, "Private Soldier under Washington," pp. 35-39, 47, 101, 172, 183, 235, 236.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

the commencement of hostilities that I have thought her liberties in such imminent danger as at present." (Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. vii, p. 382.)

The contrast between the destitution and suffering of the army and the ease with which the speculators and middlemen, "stock jobbers, forestallers and engrossers," as they were called, made money out of the fluctuations in prices and the inflated currency caused many an outburst of indignation in Washington's letters of this time. His plantation and estates were now yielding him nothing; he had used up all his saddle horses, and was obliged to accept one as a present.<sup>2</sup>

The printing presses in the British army were busily at work counterfeiting the paper money of the Congress; and the loyalists were distributing the counterfeits in full faith that by this method of increasing the quantity of the money and wrecking the patriot financial system, they would bring the war to an end sooner than by battles. Emissaries even succeeded in stealing from the Congress many reams of the paper prepared for the money and these were used on the English presses.<sup>3</sup>

The war had brought about a curious economic condition. The burden of the contest had fallen upon the farming class, who furnished most of the recruits and were impoverished while the townsmen and speculators grew rich. It is by no means an exaggeration to say that the Revolution was a farmers' war. If an effort were made to increase the army by calling out the militia agriculture would suffer, and the food supply of the army be reduced by withdrawing so many hands from the fields. It was important, Washington thought, to strike a balance by having just enough men in the army to keep the war going and leave enough in the fields to keep up the resources.

Clinton was well aware of the weakened condition of the patriots, and as soon as spring opened, he strove to make the suffering greater. He began vigorous operations for destroy-

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<sup>2</sup> Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. 7, p. 159; Heath, p. 250.

<sup>3</sup> Writings of Washington, *id.*, vol. 8, p. 129.



## VIRGINIA RAIDED

ing the country's resources and increasing his own. He could go where he pleased along the coast; for the little American navy, which had been organized at the beginning of the war, had sunk into insignificance, and its vessels lay in port where they sometimes required a land force to protect them.<sup>4</sup>

Early in May Clinton sent Sir George Collier and General Matthews with war-ships and 2500 men to devastate Virginia, which had been undisturbed for a long time and had continued raising great quantities of tobacco, the export of which, it was believed, was the principal support of the credit of the Congress with foreign nations. From Virginia also came the most important supplies of salted provisions for the support of the patriot army. Collier and Matthews sacked and burned Portsmouth, shot down unarmed citizens, and allowed their soldiers to ravish delicate and refined women. Suffolk, Kemp's Landing, Gosport and Tanner's Creek were visited with similar devastations, everything burned and leveled with the ground and the neighboring plantations desolated and robbed as far as the troops could reach. One hundred and thirty ships were destroyed and 3000 hogsheads of tobacco. The damage was estimated at over £2,000,000; which was a very large sum in those days; and an immense mass of loot was carried back to New York, without the loss of a single man.

So sudden and thorough was the work that the Virginia militia had not a chance to raise a hand; and the assembly, in utter weakness, could only request the governor to "remonstrate with the British commander against such a cruel and unprecedented manner of waging war not authorized by any civilized nation."<sup>5</sup>

Clinton's method of conquering the South, as it gradually revealed itself in the next year or two, was to occupy Georgia and South Carolina by means of their seaports, Savannah and

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<sup>4</sup> Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. vii, p. 416 and note.

<sup>5</sup> Stedman, "American War," vol. ii, pp. 136-139; Jones, "New York in the Revolution," vol. i, p. 296; Lee, Memoirs, vol. i, pp. 231, 232; Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iii, p. 260; J. J. Boudinot, "Life of Boudinot," vol. i, pp. 182-185.



## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

Charleston, and exhaust Virginia by repeated raids. South Carolina and Georgia were comparatively easy to occupy because each had only a single seaport which gave great control of the rest of the country, largely occupied by loyalists. Virginia, on the other hand, was the most patriotic and populous of the American states, had no controlling seaport, and was so cut up by estuaries from Chesapeake Bay that it would be impossible to control without a large naval force. It was, however, as events proved, very easily raided by naval expeditions, which could be supplied from their ships and retire to them when the raid was finished. As for North Carolina its single seaport, Wilmington, gave so little control of the interior, where the distances were so vast with such a scattered population, that it could well be left to stand or fall with the rest of the South.

Clinton also had raids in store for the North. The expedition of Collier and Matthews had no sooner returned to New York with its spoil, than it was joined to other troops and sent up the Hudson to check the extensive works by which the patriots were protecting their strategic position at West Point. They were fortifying posts lower down the river, especially at Stony Point, and Verplanck Point, in order to protect all approaches to the key position as well as to keep open the lower part of the river for easy communication between New England and the states to the south.

Clinton commanded in person the troops which on the 30th of May went up the west side of the Hudson and took Stony Point, without opposition; and cannon were planted on its high rocks to command Verplanck on the opposite side, which was defended by artillery and seventy Americans. They were in a hopeless position, for, besides the fire from Stony Point, General Vaughan came up the east side of the Hudson and assailed their rear. British garrisons were put in both forts, and Clinton encamped his force further down at Phillipsburg. Thus for the first time during the war the British controlled the lower reach of the Hudson and Americans coming from the South through New Jersey were obliged to make a detour of

## CONNECTICUT TOWNS SACKED

90 miles through the mountains to cross the Hudson and enter New England.<sup>6</sup>

A difference of opinion had arisen among the British generals during the winter as to whether the predatory system of warfare should be continued, and the question was submitted to the Ministry. An answer was promptly returned in April, ordering a continuance of the method by all means, and a special raid into Connecticut was recommended. The forces of the expedition were put under command of Governor Tryon, and, supported by a convoy of vessels under Sir George Collier, were landed on the 5th of July, near New Haven.

Part of the force under General Garth went to New Haven, which they completely sacked, destroying provisions and goods of every sort, plundering the houses of money and plate, and wrecking the furniture. Garth had intended to burn the town, the next day, but, his men becoming demoralized through carousing and the militia appearing in considerable force, he was compelled to seek safety on the ships. Tryon had led his men to East Haven; but was also obliged to return to the ships before he could accomplish all he had intended.

The fleet then sailed for Fairfield, where Tryon had full swing, plundering the town and laying it in ashes, without sparing even the Episcopal church. A few days afterwards Norwalk met the same fate, houses, mills, churches, stores, barns and vessels all going up in flames; and Tryon would, no doubt, have gone on in this congenial work if he had not been recalled by Clinton to help check a movement by Washington from West Point.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iii, p. 261; Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. 7, pp. 465-468, 470, 479, 480; Stedman, "American War," vol. ii, p. 140.

<sup>7</sup> Stedman, "American War," vol. ii, p. 142; Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iii, pp. 265-268; Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. vii, pp. 385 note, 483, 491 note. Judge Jones thought that this raid on New Haven, Fairfield and Norwalk was a mistake, because two-thirds of the people were Episcopalians and most of them favored the royal cause. Jones, "New York in the Revolution," vol. i, pp. 314, 315.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

Washington had decided that Stony Point and Verplanck Point could be taken by a night assault. The forts at these two points, directly opposite to each other on the Hudson, near the entrance to the Highlands, enabled the British to overrun the whole fertile region of Westchester County, and Washington entrusted the attack on Stony Point to Wayne and the attack on Verplanck to General Howe.

The rough and ready Wayne in reply to the request said that he would storm hell if Washington would prepare the plan. Wayne's command had been massacred at Paoli by No-Flint Grey's terrible use of the bayonet. Wayne was now instructed by Washington to follow his adversary's method of preventing his men firing their muskets, and at midnight of the 15th of July, 1779, he led twelve hundred patriots, with not a gun loaded, across the causeway at low tide and out on Stony Point. They rushed up over the embankments with such rapidity that, in spite of the volleys of grape shot, they lost only fifteen killed. Plunging in among the British garrison, they killed sixty-three with their bayonets, and the rest surrendered.

It was one of the most heroic feats of the war, and with the garrison now at their mercy, Wayne's men could have indulged in unlimited prisoner killing after the manner of the British. But, although tempted at first to take revenge for the numerous recent British atrocities of this sort, they stayed their hands from this crime, and the prisoners were given their lives.<sup>8</sup>

Howe on the other side of the river had a more difficult task with Verplanck. He had depended on the use of artillery which did not arrive in time and the enemy on his approach cut down all the bridges. Before he could reconstruct them a British force from New York came in on his rear and forced

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<sup>8</sup> Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iii, p. 268; Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. vii, pp. 487-490, 492-500; Stillé, "Life of Wayne," p. 190; Jones, "New York in the Revolution," vol. i, pp. 311-313; Stedman, "American War," vol. ii, pp. 144-146.

## LEE TAKES PAULUS HOOK

him to retreat. So Verplanck was not taken and Stony Point could not be held against Clinton's energy and aggressiveness. It was abandoned by the patriots within three or four days; and in the following November Clinton, finding both Verplanck and Stony Point of no more use to him, abandoned them in his turn, demolishing the fortifications and leaving them to be rebuilt by the patriots.

The taking of Stony Point by Wayne had, however, brought back Tryon before he completed his raid in Connecticut, and caused Clinton also to abandon large quantities of hay which he had had cut under guard of troops along the shores of the sound, and was about to transport to New York.

About a month after the taking of Stony Point, Light-Horse Harry Lee, of Virginia, attacked in the same way the fort on Paulus Hook, which was a spit or isthmus of sand at the present site of Jersey City. He got into the fort and took one hundred and fifty-nine prisoners, but was obliged instantly to abandon it, because the British were coming to the rescue.<sup>9</sup>

These little successes of Stony Point and Paulus Hook were by no means without their use in reconciling the patriot party to the defensive and inactive policy which the Congress and Washington had been obliged to adopt. But no headway could be made by the patriots against Clinton's predatory and wearing out system. Washington had been able to do nothing but hold the Hudson Highlands and watch him strike where he chose. All of Clinton's raids had been heavy, shocking, merciless blows, delivered in districts which had heretofore been free from the interference of the war, and where the people were enjoying a more or less profitable trade, those districts which Washington had described as so far from the seat of war and with their people living in such perfect tranquillity, that they were inclined to regard the war as, in a manner, at an end.

Recruiting for the patriot army had reached a low ebb. Town meetings held for the purpose failed to arouse any

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<sup>9</sup> Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. viii, pp. 27, 33, 34.



## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

enthusiasm; the Congress seemed to be asleep; and the practice of enlisting boys, or children a yard and a half long, as Washington called them, had begun. The only activity was in dissipation, extravagance, and wild speculation, for which the fluctuating prices and sinking paper money gave abundant opportunity; and the expensive banquets and entertainments in Philadelphia afforded an extraordinary contrast to the ragged army. "How many men are there," wrote Laurens, "who now in secret say, Could I have believed it would come to this, I would——"<sup>10</sup>

Orators may say that the extreme patriot party grew more desperate and determined; but, unfortunately, it grew smaller. It lost the support of thousands who wished it success if it could be successful quickly. These people were not willing to fall back beyond the Alleghanies; they could not endure destruction of property, annihilation of business of every kind, *and long years of waiting in the midst of universal devastation* with nothing at the end of it but to go back under England or, as might very well happen, become French colonies. It is difficult for us now to realize the deplorable state of the country; devastated and ruined, with the paper currency sunk so low that a bushel of corn cost one hundred and fifty dollars and a suit of clothes two thousand dollars.

For many miles round New York and through Long Island and along the shores of Connecticut and New Jersey, the country was in a state of anarchy in which the reckless element of all parties, loyalists, patriots and British, plundered at will. In 1779 the loyalists in New York had been allowed by the British Ministry to establish a jurisdiction of their own, independent of the commander-in-chief, and governed by a body of their own choosing called "The Honorable Board of Associated Loyalists." They had armed sloops, schooners and

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<sup>10</sup> "Life of George Reed," pp. 345, 346, 350; Bolton, "Private Soldier under Washington," p. 61; Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iii, pp. 223, 283, 285; Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. vi, p. 483 note; vol. vii, p. 505; Stedman, "American War," vol. ii, p. 153.



## THE NEUTRAL GROUND

whaleboats which were commissioned as private war vessels and given all the plunder they could secure from the patriots.

They raided the whole region round New York, robbing houses, taking prisoners, burning churches, and bringing in vast spoil of horses, cattle, hogs, sheep, poultry, furniture, slaves, clothes, blankets and linen which were sold at auction in New York for their advantage. The bitter feeling against the loyalists which soon resulted in such inhuman punishments and continued in New York long after the peace, was, no doubt, largely aroused by these raids.

When they could find no patriot property to raid, they plundered the loyalists who were still living among the patriots. The patriots organized parties to retaliate, and rob the loyalists of Long Island. As the demoralization increased with the lack of any governmental authority in the region, which gradually became known as the neutral ground, the patriot raiders joined hands with the Associated Loyalists to furnish information of likely places or persons for both sides to plunder, and divide the proceeds.

Under this arrangement, neither side attacked or fought the other; often had friendly meetings and often exchanged three cheers when their boats passed each other in the Sound. The seizing of important persons as prisoners for exchange, accompanied by a payment somewhat resembling a ransom, was a very profitable part of the business, and Judge Jones says he saw receipts for these payments amounting to from thirty to one hundred and fifty guineas.<sup>11</sup>

Clinton had now been in command a year; and if he could steadily continue his policy and not take too great risks in sending out detachments he might, in time, especially if given a few reinforcements, wear down the patriots still faster. Hutchinson describes the loyalists and English in London as greatly relieved, jubilant and full of hope that the rebellion would be put down during this summer of 1779.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Jones, "New York in the Revolution," vol. i, pp. 300-303; Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iii, p. 496.

<sup>12</sup> "Diary and Letters of Thomas Hutchinson," vol. ii, pp. 246, 248.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

Washington and the Congress, after much consideration, decided that they could do nothing except possibly make an attack on Canada at Niagara. But this expedition was abandoned and in place of it an attack was planned upon the Indians who seemed to be the only portion of the British army that was vulnerable. The massacre by the loyalists and Indians in the Wyoming Valley during the previous summer, was unavenged. It had been followed by the Cherry Valley massacre and other raiding in Northern Pennsylvania, and New York; and if the Six Nations of Indians, who were the main force in all this very successful devastation, could be broken up, or exterminated, it would be a by no means ineffective blow to Clinton's policy and conduct of the war.

The Six Nations were a powerful and intelligent contingent of red men, half civilized and inhabiting that beautiful and fertile region in central New York, dotted with large lakes and extending from Lake Ontario southward to Tioga Point on the Susquehanna. Their situation on the headwaters of the Susquehanna and Delaware had always given them easy downstream communication with Chesapeake Bay, and the South. They had numerous towns, many of them consisting of from twenty to sixty wooden houses; and one of them, Genesee, had one hundred and twenty-eight houses. They painted their dwellings after the manner of white men and had graveyards with monuments made of planks. They had orchards of peach trees and other fruits and cultivated the land, raising large crops of Indian corn.

General Sullivan was selected to destroy this interesting beginning of civilization, and his army of over 3000 men, having assembled at Wyoming on the 31st of July, set out for the North, following the course of the Susquehanna River. The Indians and loyalists, about 2000 in number, met him on the Tioga River below Newtown; but in a short and decisive battle were utterly defeated and Sullivan marched upon their towns. We can form some idea of the extent of this Indian civilization, when we find Sullivan reporting that he had destroyed forty towns, and that it had required a month to complete this work

## THE SIX NATIONS DESTROYED

of devastation. Some towns were left untouched for lack of time. Apple and peach orchards were girdled and corn and vegetables burnt.

"Wednesday, September 15. This morning the whole army, excepting a covering party, were engaged in destroying the corn, beans, potatoes and other vegetables, which were in quantity immense and in goodness unequalled by any I ever yet saw. Agreeable to a moderate calculation, there was not less than two hundred acres, the whole of which was pulled and piled up in large heaps, mixed with dry wood taken from the houses, and consumed to ashes." (Journal of Captain Adam Hubley.)

It was a ruthless destruction of the greatest advance in civilization that the red men in this country have ever attained, and we should have preferred to have had such devastation directed at the property of our real enemies, the loyalists and English. The Six Nations never recovered. Their organization was destroyed, their empire gone; they had to subsist during the following winter on British charity, and their few remaining descendants are now sometimes seen selling baskets at Saratoga and Richfield Springs.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. vii, pp. 307 note, 460-463; vol. viii, pp. 9-17; Sparks, "Life of General Sullivan;" Bolton, "Private Soldier under Washington;" Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iii, pp. 307, 401; New Jersey Historical Society Proceedings, vol. 2, 22-42; vol. 3, second series, 115-116; New Hampshire Historical Society Collections, vol. 6, 308-335; Winsor, "Handbook of the Revolution," p. 200.

## LXXVII.

### THE ALLIANCE WITH SPAIN, AND THE BON HOMME RICHARD AND THE SERAPIS

AFTER his failure to save St. Lucia from the British in December, 1778, D'Estaing remained inactive all winter and spring in Fort Royal Bay, Martinique, watched by the British fleet, which had been reinforced, and under command of Admiral Byron was the equal if not superior to the French. But in June, 1779, when Byron was obliged to convoy the great fleet of homeward bound merchantmen which assembled at that season, D'Estaing had an opportunity to break the monotony of his defeat and ill luck. On the 6th of June he sent Lieutenant Romain with four hundred and fifty men who upon landing on St. Vincent were joined by the native Caribs, and the garrison of the island surrendered without attempting a defence.

Soon afterwards five ships of the line under La Motte Piquet joined D'Estaing, who with the aid of this reinforcement planned an expedition against the English island of Granada. He arrived before St. George, the capital of the island, on the 2d of July with thirty-four war-ships, and 10,000 troops, and the next evening assaulted the stronghold of the place, an intrenched hill defended by only about seven hundred troops, but strongly fortified and difficult of access. D'Estaing headed in person his attacking force of about 2000, and the first assault failed; but in the second, the hill was carried with heavy loss. The governor of the island, Lord Macartney, had believed the hill impregnable, but the next morning when its guns were turned on the fort he declared his willingness to surrender.

D'Estaing had hurried the assault so as to secure Granada before Admiral Byron could return from convoying the merchantmen. When Byron returned and heard of the taking of

## DEFEAT OF BYRON'S FLEET

St. Vincent he immediately set out to recover it, but on his way, learning that D'Estaing was attacking Granada, he changed his course to rescue that island, and arrived just as D'Estaing's fleet, having completed the conquest and garrisoned the forts, was getting under way for sea.<sup>1</sup>

Byron's fleet was weakened by the ships he had left with the merchantmen and D'Estaing's fleet had been reinforced; but D'Estaing was content with having taken Granada, and fought cautiously. His ships that were not under way slipped their cables and stretched out to sea as rapidly as possible. Supposing that he was getting under way in great confusion, Byron having the weather gage sailed down upon him. But Byron's line was in such disorder with ships so far apart that D'Estaing concentrated his fire on isolated groups of English ships and cut their rigging to pieces. It was the worst defeat the English navy had received from the French for nearly a hundred years; and if the French admiral had followed up his advantage he might have made the defeat a catastrophe and annihilated the British fleet.

Byron was wounded; was obliged to retire to protect his transports and crippled ships; and the next morning D'Estaing's fleet returned to Granada. The French fleet lost heavily in men from the British practice of firing at the hull, while Byron's fleet lost fewer men, but had its masts and sails so cut to pieces by the French practice of firing at the rigging that it could not be repaired so far from home. D'Estaing with his reinforcements was now the superior in West India waters, and it was expected that he would take other English islands. But with that peculiar shrinking to the defensive, characteristic of the French, he took no advantage of his opportunities.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iii, p. 286; Stedman, "American War," vol. ii, pp. 91-101.

<sup>2</sup> Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iii, pp. 286, 293; Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. viii, p. 32; Stedman, "American War," vol. ii, pp. 91-101; *Annual Register*, 1779, chap. 10; Clowes, "Royal Navy," vol. iii, p. 435.



## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

The French had taken three English islands, Dominica, St. Vincent and Granada, while the English had taken only one, St. Lucia, and had lost the naval superiority in West India waters. These successes caused no little rejoicing in America; but they were more valuable to France in securing West India Islands than to the American patriots, whose cause might still fail for want of assistance against the vigorous methods of Clinton. Lafayette had gone to France to persuade the King to abandon the exclusive West Indian policy and send an army and fleet to North America or else the main object of the alliance, American independence, would be lost.

The French Court also learned, from the reports of Gerard, who had become minister to the United States, that the patriot party was deeply disappointed, not to say disgusted, to find that the ally from whom they expected so much had abandoned them for the sake of adding to her dominions in the West Indies. The French Government accordingly sent to the Congress a paper of hints or memoranda in which this grave question was handled with great delicacy, and with the appearance of being treated incidentally among other topics.

The patriots, it was suggested, had not been as well prepared as they might have been to coöperate with D'Estaing when he first arrived on their coast. They must still rely on themselves and "exert themselves in their own cause, as his Majesty exerts himself for their sake and in their cause which he has adopted." All of which was a diplomatic way of saying, Do not complain so loudly as to offend the dignity of our Court and nation; and having said this, the hints went on, in their incidental manner, to admit that the situation was very grave, and that the danger of the collapse of the patriot cause and of the whole purpose of the alliance was fully appreciated in France. Such a situation had not been expected, and after surveying the whole field, the only hope or remedy that could be seen was in securing the alliance of Spain. The triumvirate of France, Spain and America would surely be superior to England; but without Spain, affairs were now in such a deli-

## ALLIANCE WITH SPAIN

cate equipoise "that a single unlucky event might overthrow the balance."<sup>2</sup>

Everything depended on securing Spain for an ally; and the French Court had for some time been exerting the utmost efforts to that end. The Congress slowly, and in a dazed and surprised way, began to appreciate that nothing but more allies could save them, and preparations were made to secure also the alliance of Holland.

In April, 1779, France and Spain came to an understanding that Spain should openly assist to give the Americans independence. In return Gibraltar was to be recovered for Spain and France would approve of the exclusion of the Americans from all the territory west of the Alleghany Mountains. This exclusion west of the Alleghanies was not guaranteed by France, and in the final settlement in 1783 she merely made a formal statement of approval without insisting. Spain intended to keep the navigation of the Mississippi for herself alone and to conquer Florida from England so as to control the Gulf of Mexico.

In June, a French fleet, under Count D'Orvilliers, sailed from Brest and before the end of the month had joined forces with the Spanish fleet. At the same time the Spanish minister in London presented a manifesto to the British Government accompanied with notice of his immediate departure.

D'Orvilliers had got away with his ships to join the Spaniards by what was considered a lucky accident. The British Government had foreseen the new movement and had intended to use the channel fleet to block up D'Orvilliers in the harbor of Brest and prevent his junction with the Spaniards in very nearly the same way that in the following year a French fleet was locked up in Brest and another in Newport and their junction prevented. But an adventurer named Nassau had planned a freebooting expedition for plunder to the English isle of Jersey, and a discovery of his intention stopped Admiral Arbuthnot, who had started to convoy a fleet of merchantmen.

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<sup>2</sup> Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iii, pp. 273-282; Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. vii, pp. 384, 437, 505.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

Admiral Darby was ordered to join him with the ships of the line, and the two spent so much time in protecting Jersey from what may have been a rather imaginary danger, that D'Orvilliers, seeing the ocean clear of enemies, slipped out and joined the Spanish fleet while at the same time reinforcements went to D'Estaing in the West Indies. The Spanish minister in London waited until D'Orvilliers' junction with the Spaniards was sure to take place, before presenting his manifesto and announcing his withdrawal.<sup>1</sup>

It had cost the French Court great effort to bring Spain to this decided action of hostility. The Spanish Court had preferred to act as mediator in the contest, and the year before had proposed a plan by which France, America and Great Britain should disarm and suspend hostilities for a year, during which time the American states should be treated as independent and commissioners should meet to settle all differences.

England now had another war on her hands; and her downfall and ruin as a great power was predicted. But, with all Europe against her, the manner in which she met her increasing dangers was another exhibition of the vast extent of her wealth and resources. Both houses of Parliament boldly announced that this new war with Spain would be prosecuted with vigor. They had need of all their boldness, for beneath this alliance with Spain was a plan prepared in France to invade the British island. Great hopes and interest were centred in this plan. Franklin had great confidence in it; and Lafayette was to take part. A blow at England in her own home, the devastation and burning of a few English towns, raiding of the country seats of the aristocracy, and plundering their silverware as the British had plundered the silverware of the southern planters, would be a salutary lesson and suitable punishment for the merciless raids and prisoner killing of Clin-

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<sup>1</sup> Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iii, pp. 287-290; Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. viii, pp. 41 note, 43 note; Sumner, "Financier and Finances of American Revolution," vol. i, pp. 249, 250; Stedman, "American War," vol. ii, pp. 156-162.

## THE D'ORVILLIERS FIASCO

ton's troops and the barbarous massacres by the loyalists and Indians in America.

In furtherance of these plans, D'Orvilliers, with the combined French and Spanish fleets, amounting in all to sixty-six ships of the line, sailed for the coast of England and on the 16th of August arrived off Plymouth. The plans thus far were admirable, and their execution perfect. The alliance of Spain and her fleet had been obtained by skilful diplomacy, without the knowledge of England; the two fleets had joined without interference from England; they were now before Plymouth without the slightest interference, having passed by the large fleet of forty ships of the line of Sir Charles Hardy without his knowledge; and Plymouth, with valuable docks and naval magazines full of supplies, was utterly without defences. If ever there was a chance of striking a blow that England would remember and of avenging all the atrocities of Indians, loyalists, Hessians and prisoner killing regulars, in America, here it was in the hands of D'Orvilliers, one of the ablest French naval officers of his day.

But he never landed a soldier and did not even fire a shot at the land, where the whole population was in a panic of fear. There had not been so much consternation in England since the days of the Spanish Armada. He arrived and departed almost as harmlessly as if it had been a visit of naval ceremony, taking as his sole prize a British sixty-four which accidentally sailed into his fleet while going to join Sir Charles Hardy.

The cause of this miscarriage was that the French Government had changed its mind. The intention had been to seize the Isle of Wight and Spithead as a naval base and anchorage, and have the fleets protect the crossing of some 50,000 French troops to invade England. But now D'Orvilliers was instructed to change the base to the coast of Cornwall. He protested; but before he could receive a reply an easterly storm sprang up which blew him below Plymouth, and made it difficult for some days for him to return. He remained for two weeks on the coast ranging about Land's End, the Scilly Islands, and

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

the Chops of the Channel, with no British fleet to disturb him, and yet unable to use his great armament of ships, guns and troops

When at last Sir Charles Hardy's fleet appeared in sight, D'Orvilliers gave chase to it as far as Plymouth, and then received orders to abandon the whole expedition. He returned to France, with a long string of excuses about the storm, the sickness among his troops and sailors, ships out of condition, and the equinox approaching<sup>6</sup>

At this same period, a few weeks after the junction of the French and Spanish fleets, there sailed from L'Orient, France, the "Bon Homme Richard" of forty guns, accompanied by three small vessels, the "Alliance," the "Pallas" and the "Vigilance," commanded by Paul Jones, with instructions to strike England a blow close at home.

Jones had served since the beginning of the war in the little navy which the Congress had created. He had commanded the "Providence," the "Alfred," and the "Ranger," small vessels of no greater power than privateers. In the "Ranger" he had recently made a descent on the British coast and escaped after inflicting some damage, besides capturing after a spirited action the British sloop "Drake." He had allowed the "Ranger" to return to America under his second in command, and he was stranded in France unable to obtain the ship he had expected from the French Government.

Though famous for his desperate energy as a fighter, Jones is described by his contemporaries as a slender man of a rather delicate cast of features. He was really an extraordinary genius. The son of a Scotch gardener, he had become a most accomplished merchant captain, and had a plantation and mill in Virginia, which netted him over £1000 a year. He was a student of languages and manners, with a passion for work and the mastery of details in everything that interested him.

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<sup>6</sup> "Diary and Letters of Thomas Hutchinson," vol. ii, p. 281, Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iii, p. 290; *Annual Register*, 1780, chap. 1; Clowes, "Royal Navy," vol. iii, pp. 443-447.





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## THE FAMOUS SEA FIGHT

He would not allow his seamen to be flogged and on one of his voyages threw the cat overboard the first day at sea. He preferred, he said, to kill a man who was bad enough to deserve a flogging. His vivacity and accomplishments were the delight of French ladies, and one of them, the Duchess de Chartres, now interceded for him with the King and secured him the command of the little squadron, which, however, was not very formidable.

The "Bon Homme Richard" was an old East India merchantman altered into a man-of-war. His other ships were of weak power and the captain of the "Alliance" was insane. He collected all the Americans he could find in French ports; but after his best endeavors his crews were more than half foreign, largely French, with mixtures of English and Portuguese. It was not as thoroughly an American expedition as we could wish, for Jones himself was a Scotchman, and the ships, equipment and money were French. But he hoisted the stars and stripes on the "Bon Homme Richard" and devoted himself to the patriot cause. If D'Orvilliers had displayed one-tenth of his energy and resolution, he could have brought the war to an end at Plymouth in August, 1779.

Off Flamborough Head on the coast of Scotland, Jones, on the 23d of September, fell in with the Baltic fleet of merchant vessels which, according to the careful system of commerce protection England had adopted, were being convoyed by two men-of-war, the "Serapis" and the "Scarborough." The "Serapis," which was commanded by Captain Richard Pearson, quickly placed herself between Jones and the convoy, so that all the merchantmen escaped, and the "Serapis" and "Bon Homme Richard" fought one of the most remarkable naval battles of history from seven in the evening of the long northern daylight until almost the small hours of the morning.

The "Serapis" was superior in build, equipment and guns; and being more easily handled, was constantly securing advantageous positions until her mizzen rigging coming in contact with the bowsprit of the "Bon Homme Richard," Jones seized this opportunity of grappling with his enemy, as his

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

last chance. He lashed the two vessels together where they lay for hours, the muzzles of the guns almost touching, pouring broadsides and volleys of musketry into each other and hurling hand grenades and combustibles.

Both ships were at times on fire. The two captains were almost equal in desperation; and there is a tradition that they called to each other through the smoke.

"Have you struck, have you struck?" shouted the captain of the "Serapis."

"Struck! you —— fool," replied Jones, "I haven't begun to fight yet."

The "Alliance," under her insane captain, sailed round and round, firing broadsides sometimes into the "Serapis" and sometimes into the "Bon Homme Richard." But Jones was the superior in musketry and grenades; and after the "Serapis" had caught fire a number of times, some of her powder cartridges exploded, killing nearly every one abaft the mainmast and wrecking her guns. She was obliged to surrender; but the "Bon Homme Richard" was so damaged that, in spite of all efforts with the pumps, she sank two days afterwards.

This strange encounter, in which a British war-ship surrendered to an inferior vessel, which she had crippled sufficiently to sink, made Paul Jones one of the most famous men in the world, and the idol of Parisian society. He reminded the Duchess de Chartres of his promise to bring her a British frigate. It was too large, he said; but he laid at her feet the sword of the captain of the "Serapis."

They told him the English thought Captain Pearson such a hero that they had made him a knight. "The next time I meet him," said Jones, "I will make him an earl."

But his brilliant fight with the "Serapis" and the "Scarborough" accomplished little or nothing in a substantial way. All solid advantage had been lost by the failure of the expedition under D'Orvilliers; and the victory of Jones, beyond its advantage to himself, could be said to have had only a possible moral effect in the elation and encouragement it gave

## CAREER OF PAUL JONES

the patriots and the French. It had no effect in checking the rising tide of English success as D'Orvilliers might have done, if he had been allowed to use his opportunity.

Jones was never able to get to sea again in a way to achieve any important results. Delays and mishaps with some ordinary privateering of some of his officers, fill the remainder of his career during the Revolution; and, although he afterwards served with distinction in the Russian navy, he would never have filled such a large space in history if it had not been for that wonderful moonlight battle with the "Serapis."<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Stedman, "American War," vol. ii, pp. 163-166; Buell, "Life of Paul Jones"; Clowes, "Royal Navy," vol. iv, pp. 12, 35.



## LXXVIII.

### THE BRITISH ESTABLISH A POST IN MAINE AND THE FRENCH FAIL TO TAKE SAVANNAH

THE British assailed the American cause from all sides and French assistance continued to fail. In June, 1779, an expedition under Colonel Francis McLean started from Halifax, Nova Scotia, and established a post at Penobscot on the coast of Maine for the double purpose of checking patriot intentions towards Nova Scotia and to obtain a constant supply of ship timber for the English yards at Halifax. Massachusetts claimed the honor of repelling this invasion of her territory and fitted out a rather powerful force of twenty armed vessels and twenty-four transports carrying troops, which arrived before Penobscot on the 25th of July.

General Lovel, who commanded this Massachusetts armament, might have taken the British fort by a vigorous attack as soon as he arrived, for the redoubts and other defences were not completed. But taking a great many precautions and delaying until the 12th of August, he suddenly found that a British squadron was approaching and about to hem him into the harbor. The squadron was under command of Sir George Collier, who had promptly sailed from Sandy Hook as soon as Lovel's expedition against Penobscot was known.

Lovel drew up his ships in order of battle; but seeing the uselessness of the contest, he abandoned all his armed vessels and transports to the enemy, and, taking his troops ashore, escaped back to Boston by land as best he could. According to some accounts his men, sailors and landmen, quarrelled as to which were to blame for their misfortune, and 50 or 60 were killed, while others perished of hunger in the woods. It was a bad defeat, a serious blow to the patriots. Several of the officers were court-martialed for misconduct; and among them Paul Revere, who however was acquitted. The British

## D'ESTAING IN GEORGIA

strengthened Penobscot, and made it the best constructed fort in America. It became their foothold in New England, like New York in the Middle States and Charleston in the South. Maine was regarded by the British as conquered and they erected it into a province called New Ireland. Penobscot could not be taken by the patriots unless they had a naval superiority on the coast; and it remained in the possession of the British until the close of the war.<sup>1</sup>

The possession by the British of Savannah and the greater part of Georgia was such a serious menace to South Carolina, which would evidently be the next object of attack, that in the summer of 1779, when D'Estaing was suddenly successful in taking St. Vincent and Granada in the West Indies, the patriot governor of South Carolina, General Lincoln, and the French consul at Charleston wrote letters to D'Estaing urging him to come to their assistance. He might, they thought, be able to break the British hold on Georgia by taking Savannah with his fleet. The proposal accorded entirely with his feelings and position. He had discretionary orders from his government to assist the American patriots if opportunity offered; the hurricane season was coming on when nothing could be done in the West Indies; and flushed with his recent success he saw visions of adding the conquest of Georgia to his list of victories.

On the 11th of September he arrived suddenly off Georgia with twenty sail and took four British war-ships, which, unaware of his approach, had no time to escape. Washington wanted him to come north and attack the British in New York. He prepared plans and sent numerous letters urging this project as the heaviest blow that could be given to the British

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<sup>1</sup> "Diary and Letters of Thomas Hutchinson," vol. ii, pp. 285, 286; Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iii, p. 305; Jones, "New York in the Revolution," vol. i, pp. 206-209; Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. viii, pp. 49, 50, 249, 250; vol. ix, p. 215; vol. x, pp. 59, 195; Gettemy, "The True Story of Paul Revere," chap. 5; Maine Historical Society Collections, vol. vii, pp. 121-126; Winsor, "Handbook of the Revolution," p. 208; Stedman, "American War," vol. ii, pp. 147-151; Clowes, "Royal Navy," vol. iv, p. 28; Heath, Memoirs, pp. 217, 273.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

occupation in America; for if New York fell the war would be ended. But D'Estaing appears to have thought that he was doing rather more than was required in coming so far as Georgia, and he had not the slightest intention of going a step farther northward. The French islands in the West Indies were too important to be jeopardized by over assistance to the patriots on the continent. Indeed, the French minister, Gerard, had at first claimed that the expedition to Georgia was an extraordinary service which, by the conditions of the treaty, would require a special compensation from the United States.<sup>2</sup>

To help D'Estaing in his attack, the militia of South Carolina were rapidly collected from all directions and Lincoln led them by land against Savannah, while D'Estaing at first seems to have intended to assail the town with his ships. The English, though taken by surprise, made most desperate and determined efforts to defend themselves. The outer battery on Tybee Island was abandoned and destroyed. The channel was blocked up by sinking in it two war-ships and four transports. The whole force was concentrated in the harbor and town and men employed day and night to strengthen the lines of defence. D'Estaing demanded a surrender, and, if he had insisted on immediate response, the English would in all probability have given up the town, or if they refused the French army could have immediately swept over the half finished intrenchments and restored Georgia to the patriots. But General Prevost cleverly asked twelve hours for consideration, and when it was granted used the time to strengthen his defences, mount more guns, and obtain a reinforcement of eight hundred from Beaufort. The reinforcement was brought by Colonel Maitland, his men wading and dragging their boats through swamps.

The garrison thus strengthened gave three cheers and General Prevost rejected the demand to surrender. Lincoln and D'Estaing had made a great mistake in not cutting off

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<sup>2</sup> Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. vii, pp. 348, 425-429; vol. viii, pp. 51-54, 62, 70, 73-86, 96, 98, 104 note, 106, 108, 110 note.

## SIEGE OF SAVANNAH

Maitland's detachment before it reached the town, which in the opinion of Lee could readily have been done. As the channel was blocked and the French ships could not approach the town, more time was lost while troops, cannon, equipment and supplies were landed and carried five miles to begin a regular siege. The ships meanwhile remained anchored in the ocean in a most dangerous position, some of them losing anchors and rudders, while their starved, half-naked and bare-footed crews, died of the scurvy at the rate of thirty-five a day.

Parallel trenches were begun on the 23rd of September; and on the 4th of October the Americans and French opened a cannonade with nine mortars and fifty-three cannon, which was continued for four or five days without result. D'Estaing had in the beginning announced that he could remain on shore only ten or fifteen days, and, this time having more than elapsed, he became impatient when told by the engineers that the siege might take a much longer time. This conduct, like his abandonment of Newport the year before, was due, it is said, more to the influence of his captains than to his own wishes and intention. One of his officers, whose journal has come down to us, complains of his excessive ambition and rashness and upbraids him for leaving the West Indies unprotected. The expedition was, no doubt, very unpopular among the captains, and possibly they were unwilling that a military officer should win the credit of taking Savannah. Their reasons for abandoning the attempt were, however, exceedingly plausible if not strong. The fleet, they said, was out of repair and should not be any longer risked on that coast in the hurricane season; and it was now lying at such a distance from shore that in the absence of so many of its men and guns, it might be surprised and taken by an inferior British force.

If these arguments were to be heeded the prudent thing to do was to raise the siege and save the fleet which was supposed to be in such danger. But D'Estaing, anxious to please both the Americans and his own officers, did what, under the circumstances, was a useless waste of life. He resolved on a general assault without waiting for the effect of regular and slow

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

approaches, and selected the morning of the 9th of October for the attack.

Reckless and useless though it was, the assault was made with great gallantry by six hundred continentals, three hundred and fifty South Carolina militia and thirty-five hundred Frenchmen led in person by General Lincoln and Count d'Estaing. They reached the redoubts; an American and a French flag were planted on them; and that romantic cavalryman, Count Pulaski, at the head of two hundred horsemen, was riding into the town between two of the redoubts when he was shot from his saddle. For nearly an hour the Americans and French fought at the intrenchments, while the English cut them to pieces with artillery loaded with scrap iron, knives, scissors and even chains five or six feet long. The assailants then retired with the loss of over seven hundred Frenchmen and three hundred continentals.

Everything in the undertaking had been a mistake; the failure to assault at once before the works were strengthened and Maitland had arrived, the failure to cut off Maitland, and the premature attack against a reinforced garrison instead of waiting for a regular siege. But as D'Estaing had met with ignominious reverse and failure and was slightly wounded, his naval captains were presumably satisfied. The whole French force returned to the fleet, which within a few days was scattered by a violent gale, leaving the patriot cause in a worse condition than if the attack on Savannah had never been attempted.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> "The Siege of Savannah as Described in Two Journals of French Officers," Albany, 1874; Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iii, p. 325; "Correspondence of Henry Laurens," p. 161; Lee, *Memoirs*, vol. i, pp. 99-112; *Magazine of History*, August, 1878; *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1779, p. 633; Stedman, "American War," vol. ii, pp. 121-134.



## LXXIX.

### THE FALL OF CHARLESTON

To assist the American cause the Spaniards were besieging by both land and sea the great British stronghold of Gibraltar. But they were making no impression on it; and they never succeeded in taking it. In New Orleans Don Galvez, the Spanish governor of Louisiana, under instructions from Madrid, had publicly recognized the independence of the United States. He then proceeded against some small British settlements on the Mississippi which after a nine days' siege he succeeded in taking with their five hundred defenders. About the same time the Spaniards attacked and scattered the English logwood cutters in Honduras. The governor of the English island of Jamaica retaliated by sending two expeditions which took by storm the Spanish stronghold, Omoa, the key to the Bay of Honduras. But the Spaniards soon afterwards retook it.<sup>1</sup>

The patriot party had always expected to cripple England by exciting rebellion in Ireland. The documents issued by the Congress for that purpose seemed now to be having some result, and the Irish had started upon one of those uprisings which have been so numerous and in some respects so useless. They formed associations, like those in America, against the use of English manufactured goods. Military companies were secretly organized under color of defence against French invasion; and these companies numbered, it is said, 50,000 men before the British Government was fully aware of what was happening.

It was a very serious and increasing danger, but the Ministry handled it with great adroitness. Not daring to precipi-

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<sup>1</sup> Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iii, pp. 304, 313, 314, 401, 409; Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. viii, pp. 205, 294, 295; Lee, Memoirs, vol. i, p. 143; Stedman, "American War," vol. ii, pp. 168-175.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

tate an outbreak by attempting to disband, or break up the companies, the Ministry accepted them for their avowed purpose of defence against invasion, and gained time by shrewdly prolonging the negotiation with the leaders over the fresh claims for Irish free trade and other rights.<sup>2</sup>

Thus, to their great surprise, the patriot party was discovering that even with the aid of a French and Spanish alliance and rebellion in Ireland, the cause of independence was nearer to extermination than it had been without any alliance. Their own forces were exhausted and could do nothing more than hold the Hudson Highlands; and the only possible remedy for the situation seemed to lie in encouraging their allies to greater exertion.

John Jay, of New York, was sent to the Court at Madrid and instructed to intimate that, in return for a loan of \$5,000,000 and such other aid as would lead to the establishment of American independence, Florida would be ceded to Spain. With Holland we had had a secret understanding ever since 1778. She could do nothing for us openly, but had shown her inclination to be friendly by sheltering Paul Jones's ships at the Texel after the fight with the "Serapis," and refusing to surrender him to Great Britain as "the pirate Paul Jones of Scotland, a rebel subject and a criminal of the state." To Holland was accordingly sent Henry Laurens, President of the Congress, to negotiate a loan and an open treaty of friendship and commerce. John Adams was sent to Europe to be ready with an ultimatum to be offered to England. It was supposed that she might yield to the pressure of the continental nations and offer terms of peace.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iii, pp. 302-400; Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. viii, p. 218.

<sup>3</sup> Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iii, pp. 315-323, 402, 427; "Work of John Adams," vol. i, chap. 6; vol. iii, pp. 186, 229, 259; vol. vii, pp. 119, 120, 139; "Diplomatic Correspondence of the Revolution," vol. iv, p. 339; Rives, "Life of Madison," vol. i, chaps. 6 and 8; Writings of Madison, vol. iv, p. 441; Jay, "Life of Jay."

## CHARLESTON EXPEDITION

But while these slow moving enterprises of diplomacy were crossing the ocean, General Clinton went on with his very effective work of conquest. When D'Estaing attacked Savannah in September, Clinton appears to have thought that it might be the prelude to a combined patriot and French attack on New York. He accordingly, for the better protection of that town, withdrew the garrison from Newport, Rhode Island, removing at the same time the numerous loyalist refugees who were sent for safety to Long Island which had now become almost a loyalist state.

He had hoped to receive large reinforcements, and in that event intended to bring Washington to a general engagement, or attack the stronghold of the Hudson Highlands. But, only part of the expected reinforcements arriving, he strengthened the defences of New York so that he could leave it and conduct in person an expedition against South Carolina. He was in haste to depart in September or October, but was delayed by a call from the governor of Jamaica for assistance and reinforcements. The reinforcements had just started when they were ordered back because news had been received of the arrival of D'Estaing's fleet at Savannah.<sup>4</sup>

Finally, on December 26th, 1779, having waited till the coast was clear of the French fleet, and having waited one day more to celebrate Christmas in true English fashion, he sailed from New York in *personal command of his southern expedition* of 7000 men. The rough seas and storms of an unusually tempestuous January kept his fleet more than a month on the passage to Savannah. He lost several of his transports and victuallers; and an ordnance ship sank with all her stores and most of the draught and cavalry horses.

If he had delayed his departure a little longer he might have been locked up for the rest of the winter, for the ice soon shut in New York harbor and cut off all communication

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<sup>4</sup> Jones, "New York in the Revolution," vol. i, pp. 315-317; Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. viii, pp. 39, 40, 61 note, 64 note, 77 note, 87, 89, 102 and note, 144 note, 145, 146.

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with the sea. "The Bay of New York," says Judge Jones, "and thence up the North River to Albany, was mere terra firma." The ice was so strong for a long distance out in the sound, that British deserters crossed on it from Lloyd's Neck to Connecticut. New York and Staten Island were no longer protected by water, and it seemed as if the patriots could come across the ice with their heaviest artillery and sweep everything before them. The greatest exertions were made to protect the town by new defences, and all the citizens were forced to arms or labor.

But Washington's army was suffering more from the cold and snow than the British, and was so reduced in numbers and so demoralized by starvation and disputes over enlistments and inequality of bounty, that the troops in order to save their lives, plundered the inhabitants. An ineffectual attack by Stirling on the loyalists of Staten Island was all that was attempted.<sup>5</sup>

After reaching Savannah Clinton took his army on the 11th of February to Johns Island, thirty miles from Charleston, and began to carry out a most thorough and systematic plan for taking the capital of South Carolina. His methods were so intelligent and practical, that they furnish an additional reason for believing that his failure to take Charleston four years before must have been due to misunderstandings with Sir Peter Parker, rather than to any deficiency in himself.

He now began his proceedings by blockading the entrance of the harbor so that if his attack on the land side succeeded there could be no escape for the patriots by sea. He was evidently determined that Charleston should not again elude him. He took the utmost precautions and moved with what seemed unnecessary slowness and deliberation. But his object in this

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<sup>5</sup> Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iii, p. 361; Jones, "New York in the Revolution," vol. i, pp. 320-323, 318; Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. viii, pp. 155-166, 180, 181, 183, 187, 213, 219; "Life of Colonel Hanger," pp. 173, 174; Stedman, "American War," vol. ii, pp. 233, 239.

## SIEGE OF CHARLESTON

may have been to encourage the patriots to collect as many troops as possible in Charleston where he could more easily surround and take them.

He began his land operations by establishing posts to the south and southeast of the town to protect his communications with the sea, and February and most of March were spent in this work. The main defences of the town were stretched across the narrow neck of land formed by the Ashley and Cooper rivers at the confluence of which the town was situated. On the 29th of March, some of his troops crossed the Ashley River and encamped in the neck between the two rivers and about 3000 yards from the defences of the town.

These defences had been made with great care under the direction of General Lincoln. The outer defence was an abatis of felled trees; behind this was a wet ditch with fortifications at its ends so constructed as to rake the ditch from one end to the other; and between the ditch and the main line of intrenchments deep holes were dug short distances apart. In the middle of the whole line a strong citadel was erected. But the patriot cause had sunk so low in the South since the conquest of Georgia and all the classes of loyalism had so greatly increased, that, with his utmost exertions, Lincoln, though hoping for 10,000, had been able to collect only twenty-two hundred militia besides sailors in the batteries, and a large part of these came from North Carolina and Virginia.

Clinton's intention of taking Charleston had been suspected in November, and a patriot naval force of nine sail had been collected in the harbor including Paul Jones's ship, the "Ranger." These war vessels had intended to fight the enemy at the bar where the English ships would have to take out their guns in order to float across. But it was found that the patriot vessels drew so much water that they could not go near enough to the bar, which the British crossed in perfect safety on the 8th of April. The nine patriot vessels then fell back to the town. The crews and guns of all except the "Ranger" were taken out and put in the batteries



## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

on shore, some of the ships were stationed in the Cooper River, and the rest with some hulks sunk across the mouth of it to prevent the British from entering.

The harbor being lost it was the opinion of Washington and other military men that the town was indefensible, because it could be locked up on both the land and the sea side and starved into submission. It would probably have been better if Lincoln had evacuated it as St. Clair evacuated Ticonderoga. He could still escape with his troops into the open country, and he would, in that case, save his troops, and might use them to prevent Clinton taking possession of the state. Holding the town was merely collecting patriots in a convenient place for surrender to the British. But Charleston had once escaped through the incompetence of British officers, and the South Carolina patriots thought it would now be saved by a miracle. Troops from Virginia, they thought, would come to their assistance. Many also believed that this was the last stand of patriotism in the South, and that it should be fought out to the end. Lincoln was persuaded to remain against his better judgment with the almost sure prospect of losing both troops and town. He was, as Harry Lee said, an excellent man, brave and prudent, much respected by Washington, but not a consummate soldier.<sup>a</sup>

On the 9th of April, the British fleet of seven war vessels sailed by Fort Moultrie under a severe fire which did some damage and killed and wounded 27 sailors. But the injuries were slight and the fleet anchored in good condition within cannon shot of Charleston. This successful running of the batteries of Fort Moultrie seemed to show that Sir Peter Parker could have followed the same course four years before, instead of anchoring in front of the fort and giving it a chance to pound his ships to pieces.

On the 10th of April, the day after this successful entrance

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<sup>a</sup> Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. viii, pp. 251, 252; "The Siege of Charleston," p. 10; Lee, *Memoirs*, vol. i, p. 75.

## TARLETON AT MONKS CORNER

of the British fleet into the harbor, Clinton had completed his first parallel of approach on the land side and summoned the town to surrender. The summons was refused and two days afterwards the British opened fire, which was continued until the 20th with replying shots from the Americans, while the second British parallel was being dug.

The investment of the town was not complete, and the Americans had a way out to the north of the Cooper River on the neck between that river and the Santee. They protected this communication by batteries and cavalry under Colonel Washington, and by this means seven hundred continentals from the North entered the town. But this reinforcement was offset by a like number of North Carolina militia, who went home. True to the habit of militiamen, their time of service having expired, neither threats, nor arguments, nor the dire straits of the town could keep them.

The besieging army had an energetic young officer named Tarleton, who some years before had taken part in the surprise and capture of General Lee in New Jersey. He had now risen to the rank of colonel and was in command of the cavalry who lost their horses on the voyage to Savannah. He quickly obtained fresh horses in South Carolina, and had already attacked and scattered several small bodies of the militia who were trying to keep open the northern communication. On the 14th of April, he surprised at night at Monks Corner the main body of the patriot cavalry, which kept open the communication. Their horses were ready saddled and bridled, and their pickets warned them of Tarleton's approach, when he was a mile away. But so rapid was his charge, that he cut them to pieces and scattered the survivors in the woods and swamps before they could make ready to defend themselves.

The main body of the British instantly followed up this success by occupying the neck between the Cooper and the Santee rivers, and closing the northern communication. A day or two afterwards three thousand reinforcements arrived from New York; and these were used to complete the investment and

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

shut in the garrison from every avenue of escape on the land side.

The only hope that remained to the garrison was that reinforcements might arrive from the North and raise the siege. To secure time for this, Lincoln offered to capitulate if his army was allowed to withdraw and security given for the safety of the property and people of the town. These terms were, of course, rejected by Clinton, and a day or two afterwards the patriots made a sally on a British working party. Most of the garrison had been withdrawn from Fort Moultrie to be used in defence of the town and on the 6th of May Fort Moultrie surrendered. On the same day Clinton completed his third parallel close to the town's defences, and by running a tap to the ditch drew most of the water from it. At the same time Tarleton surprised the remains of the patriot cavalry as they were crossing Launceau's Ferry, and, charging in his dashing style, again cut them to pieces and scattered the survivors in the swamps.

The garrison had now only a week's fresh provisions and negotiations for a surrender were begun. The civil authorities and the citizens had in the beginning opposed the abandonment of the town, and they were now stubbornly opposed to a surrender unless Clinton would agree that those who did not choose to submit to the British Government should have leave to sell their estates and quit the country. This would seem to indicate that the patriots believed that if Charleston fell the Revolution would be over in the South, and that the Carolinas and Georgia would become a permanent British possession like Canada in the North.

Clinton rejected the terms and ordered the bombardment of the town to begin. A heavy fire from cannon, mortars and small arms at close range was begun on the 8th of May and continued for three days. The Hessian Chasseurs showed unexpected skill in using their rifles in the American fashion and picked off any one who showed his head above the fortifications. The garrison replied vigorously; but at the end of the three days most of their guns were dismounted or silenced for want

## CHARLESTON TAKEN

of ammunition, the militia had thrown down their arms, and the citizens were willing to accept any terms of surrender. The articles were signed on the 12th of May and could not be called severe. The militia were allowed to go home on parole; the other troops were prisoners of war, and the citizens of the town prisoners on parole. Whether the patriot citizens should be given time to sell their property and leave the country was left for future discussion.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Stedman, "American War," vol. ii, pp. 176-188; Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iii, p. 346; Moultrie's Memoirs, vol. ii, p. 84; Ramsay's "Revolution in South Carolina," vol. ii, p. 45; Tarleton's Narrative; Johnson's Traditions, p. 250; Munsell, "Siege of Charleston;" Simms' "South Carolina in the Revolution;" Rochambeau's Memoirs, edition 1824, vol. i, pp. 241-243; Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. viii, p. 264 note; vol. ix, pp. 286, 287; G. W. Greene, "Life of General Greene," vol. iii, p. 10; Lee, Memoirs, vol. i, pp. 115-142; *Annual Register*, 1780, chap. 10; Bowen, "Life of General Lincoln."

## LXXX.

### SOUTH CAROLINA CONQUERED AND GREAT REJOICING IN ENGLAND

THE fall of Charleston was a heavy blow to the patriot cause. It was not a large town; for its population at that time is said to have been only 9000 whites and 5000 negroes. But it was the largest town of that region; the commercial and intellectual capital of the South as Boston was of New England. It was famous for its handsome buildings, abundant commerce, refinement and wealth, and the fondness of its people for pleasure and display. The picturesqueness of slavery, the quaint humor of the slaves, the romantic life of the planters who lived on their great estates, sent their sons to England to be educated, and visited Charleston for social intercourse, music and horse racing, had given the town a peculiar character which will never again be seen in America. Its fall seemed to indicate that the South had gone British and loyalist.<sup>1</sup>

Lincoln's conduct in refusing to abandon the town while he had a chance was one of the worst mistakes that was made on the patriot side during the war. It gave the British instant control of the whole of Georgia and South Carolina, with good prospects of gaining North Carolina; for the army that Lincoln lost was practically the whole southern army. If it had been taken out of the town the scattered militia and patriot bands might have rallied to it and created a force which might have saved the interior of the country. Moreover, hundreds of civilians, the leaders of the patriot party in the South, were surrendered with the army. They were paroled, imprisoned, transported to Florida or otherwise rendered use-

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<sup>1</sup> G. W. Greene, "Life of General Greene," vol. iii, p. 10; Lee, *Memoirs*, vol. i, p. 124; *Historical Magazine*, November, 1865.



## MASSACRE AT WAXHAW

less to the cause. Bereft of the patriot army and patriot leaders the country was not only more easily conquered by the British and loyalists, but relapsed into a long period of anarchy and murderous feuds which have left their mark on southern life to this day. St. Clair by abandoning Ticonderoga overwhelmed himself with popular abuse, but saved an army which three months afterwards took part in defeating Burgoyne. Lincoln, by persisting in a hopeless defence saved himself from popular clamor, but did his country an ill turn.

It has been said that Charleston might have been saved if the patriots throughout the State and in North Carolina had aroused themselves and come in behind the British in the trenches. But there were comparatively few patriots left in the back districts of the Carolinas and those few were scattered and unorganized. The only thing that could by any possibility have saved the town was some delay, which would have prolonged the siege, until the hot weather and sickly season began to decimate Clinton's troops, or until the arrival of the French fleet under De Ternay, with 6000 troops under Rochambeau. They were on the ocean, and intended to raise the siege. But when near the Bermudas the French Admiral learned from a captured British vessel that the town had surrendered and he went northward to Rhode Island.

The French were again unlucky; and Clinton's method of reducing the rest of South Carolina to submission was an earnest that patriotism would soon be exterminated. Detachments from his large force were spread out through the state; and an incident occurred which shows what could be accomplished by thoroughness in pursuit. A Virginia patriot corps of three hundred men commanded by Colonel Buford was marching down to the relief of Charleston, but hearing of the surrender retreated northward. Colonel Tarleton pursued and, although they had a long start, he caught up with them at the Waxhaws. Nearly the whole command was destroyed. Tarleton's dragoons put to death and wounded nearly two hun-

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

dred of the prisoners on the excuse that they believed that their own commander had fallen.<sup>2</sup>

Clinton left Lord Cornwallis with four thousand men in charge of South Carolina, and his lordship inaugurated a most vigorous system of compelling the inhabitants to take the British oath of allegiance, and also tried to compel them to take part in re-establishing and maintaining the royal supremacy. Thousands of patriots took the oath of allegiance, intending to break it, as most of them did, at the first opportunity. They considered the oath as forced upon them to save their lives and property, and therefore not binding on their consciences. Other patriots took refuge in the swamps and forests of the interior, very much as Washington had feared that the whole patriot party might be obliged to do.

On the 3rd of June Cornwallis wrote to Clinton that the recent dispersion of a party of rebels on the northwest border of the province had put an end to all resistance in South Carolina, and he described the sort of military government he was instituting.

"As the different districts submitted I, with all the dispatch in my power, formed them into militia and appointed field officers according to the old divisions of the province. I invested those officers with civil as well as military power, as the most effectual means of preserving order and re-establishing the king's authority in this country." (B. F. Stevens, "Clinton-Cornwallis Controversy," vol. i, p. 221.)

He goes on to describe how he divided the militia into classes according to age and property; and this militia was composed of the loyalists, who evidently were numerous. He counted among loyalists and admitted to the militia, those persons "whose behavior had always been moderate." His success and the great number of loyalists are shown when

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<sup>2</sup> Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iii, p. 360; Stedman, "American War," vol. ii, p. 193; Tarleton, Narrative, pp. 31, 32; Lee, Memoirs, vol. i, pp. 148-151; Johnson, "Life of Greene," vol. i, pp. 280, 286.

## ANARCHY IN CAROLINA

we find that in the district of Ninety-Six alone, he raised four thousand of these militia.<sup>3</sup>

The patriot militia and civil officers, magistrates, councillors and legislators, were sent on their parole to the islands on the coast. The ordinary patriots, and all who were notoriously disaffected to England, were disarmed and ordered to remain at home and furnish wagons and horses for the British army.

These arrangements are interesting as showing the methods that Englishmen thought necessary at that time to pacify an American State and reduce it to a colony. Cornwallis was, however, severely criticised by northern loyalists for not restoring South Carolina to British rule in the same way that Georgia was restored by opening the courts of justice, restoring the old colonial legislature and all British civil rights, and appointing a governor and civil officers down to justices of the peace. The severe military method of Cornwallis, accompanied by plunder and confiscation, had the effect, it was said, of alienating from the British interest all the hesitating class and many loyalists and preventing the easy conquest of North Carolina and Virginia. But the population of Georgia was so small and so largely loyalist, that it may have been an easy matter to restore civil rights at once, while the larger population and the proportionally larger patriot element in South Carolina may have rendered an immediate restoration of civil rights impossible.<sup>4</sup>

There was for a long time a frightful scene of anarchy and confusion in South Carolina; plundering, murdering and confiscating; the patriots retaliating as best they could; and the British officers, privates and camp followers growing rich. The plundering of the country was reduced to a system, with regular commissaries appointed to take charge of the spoil and sell it for the benefit of the army; and although the prices

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<sup>3</sup> B. F. Stevens, "Clinton-Cornwallis Controversy," vol. i, p. 242.

<sup>4</sup> Stedman, "American War," vol. ii, pp. 190-200; Jones, "New York in the Revolution," vol. i, p. 354; Lee, Memoirs, vol. i, pp. 71, 72.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

were low, yet the dividend of a major-general under this system is said to have been over £4000.

Besides this, the officers and men plundered on their own account; and an officer's profits in this way were apt to be more than he drew in the public dividend. They loaded vessels with rice and slaves and sent them to the West Indies. Over 2000 negroes are said to have been shipped off in one embarkation.

It had been announced by proclamation in the most broad and liberal English manner, that, if the people would submit, a general pardon, with certain exceptions, would be issued for past offences and the state would be restored to all the rights and immunities of free British government including the American claim of no taxation without representation. But before this condition of ideal felicity could be reached, there was, it seems, terrible work to be done to break the spirit of the patriots and enable them to appreciate the blessings that were offered them.

All non-combatants who would not turn loyalist were impressed, and sometimes shot in their own houses in the presence of their wives and children; those who broke the oath of allegiance were hanged; hundreds were impressed and forced to serve in British ships and regiments; and the prison ships were such pest houses that three-fourths of those confined in them were quickly destroyed. The devastation of plantations and homes was so complete that the line of a British raid could be traced by the groups of women and children, once of ample fortune, sitting by fires in the woods. All this was done under instructions from the Ministry sent through Germain and carried out by Lord Cornwallis. He was a Whig, had voted against the Stamp Act, but, now that he was serving under Clinton with explicit instructions from the Ministry, had completely changed his character.<sup>5</sup>

It was at this time, during the summer of 1780, that the

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<sup>5</sup> Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iii, pp. 382-389; Draper, "King's Mountain and Its Heroes," pp. 45-47.

## MARION'S MEN

patriots, who would not take the oath of allegiance, and had retreated to the swamps and mountains of the interior, maintained, under Marion, Sumter, Pickens, and Williams, that partisan warfare which became so famous. Marion, the most popular of these heroes, was of Huguenot origin, and is described as a small, hardy, taciturn man, acclimated to swamps and fevers, a lover of horses, a hard rider, inspired with all the generosity, chivalry and humanity towards enemies, which was so dear to the southern heart; and of an intelligence that seemed to fit him for higher military command than he ever attained.

The number of men commanded by these rovers was insignificant. Their attacking parties were as small as twenty and seldom over one hundred. But the suddenness of their appearance, the fury of their attack, and the swiftness and secrecy of their flight were appalling to European soldiers. No small British outpost or settlement of loyalists was safe from them; and they would even attack a whole column upon the march, slash about with their swords made of old saw blades, shoot pewter bullets from their pistols, and escape. In Sumter's attack on the Prince of Wales' regiment and a party of loyalists which he nearly annihilated, his men had only ten bullets apiece, and fought the last part of the engagement with the arms and ammunition taken from the enemy.<sup>o</sup>

Such successful guerilla warfare shows that there was good reason for Burke's warning and the anxiety of the Ministry, that the patriot party, if driven beyond the Alleghanies, would become a perpetual terror to British authority on the coast.

Otho Williams, in describing the first occasion when he saw Marion's men, said, "their number did not exceed twenty men and boys, some white, some black, and all mounted; but most

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<sup>o</sup> Niles, "Principles and Acts of the Revolution," edition 1876, p. 389; Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iii, pp. 427, 428, 455, 457; Lee, Memoirs, vol. i, p. 164. In Simms' "Life of Marion" will be found good descriptions of the confusion in South Carolina at this period.



## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

of them miserably equipped; their appearance was, in fact, so burlesque that it was with much difficulty the diversion of the regular soldiery was restrained."<sup>7</sup> Their methods and the conditions in South Carolina are quite well shown in some extracts from Marion's letters.

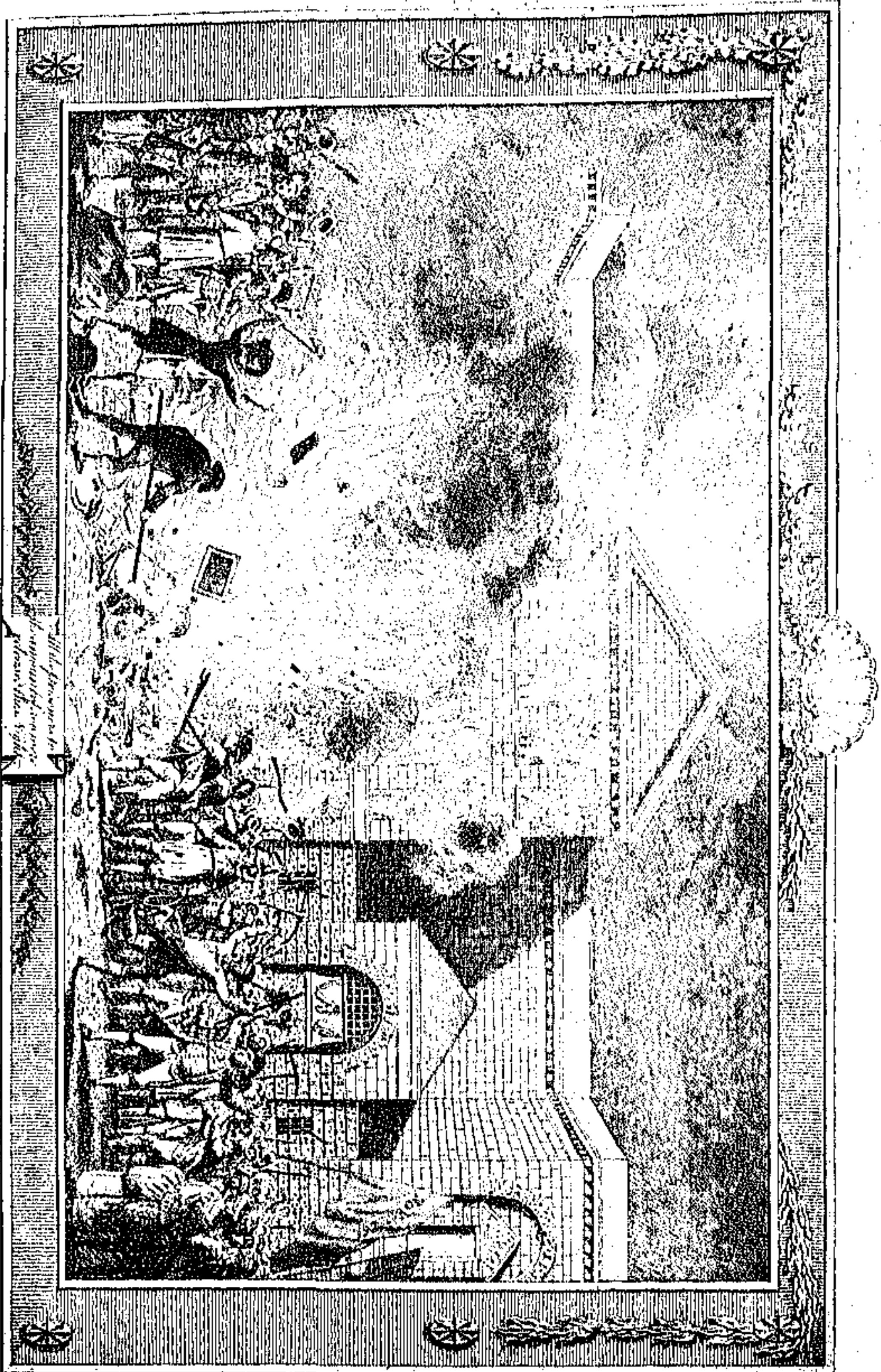
"On September the 4th, marched with 53 to attack a body of 200 Tories who intended to surprise me;—surprised a party of 45, killed and wounded all but fifteen, who escaped:—met and attacked the main body, and put them to flight, though they had 200 men. . . . Marched to Black Mingo Sept. 24th, where was a guard of 60 men of the militia:—attacked them on the 28th:—killed three, wounded and took 13 prisoners. So many of my men were desirous of seeing their wives and families which have been burnt out, that I found it necessary to retreat the next morning." (Gordon, vol. iii, p. 455.)

His men were not necessarily patriots, but desperate characters who would fight on any side for plunder. "Many who fought with me," he said, "I am obliged to fight against," and again, "Many of my people have left me and gone over to the enemy."

In England the news of the fall of Charleston, the capital city of the South, was received with great rejoicing. It came at a most opportune time, shortly after the suppression of the Lord George Gordon anti-Catholic riots. These riots had originated in that dread of popish domination which has so frequently seized the English population, and in the present instance it was stimulated by an apparent increase of Roman Catholics and an Act of Parliament passed in May for relieving certain of their disabilities. Such rioting has never been known in England before or since. The rioters visited all the jails in London, broke them open, let the prisoners loose, and burnt several of the jails to the ground. They destroyed a Roman Catholic chapel and school. They sacked the houses of Sir George Saville and of Justice Fielding, carrying the furniture out into the street and burning it. In the same way they carried out of Lord Mansfield's house his furniture, invaluable papers, fine library and pictures, burned all in the street

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<sup>7</sup> Johnson, "Life of General Greene," vol. i, p. 488.



OLD ENGRAVING OF THE GORDON RIOTS IN LONDON  
(Engraved by Thornton for Barnard's History of England)

LIBRARY

## THE GORDON RIOTS

and then set the house on fire. The Bank of England narrowly escaped destruction; for the Scotch troops which defended it were supposed to be strongly in sympathy with the Protestant rioters.

Parliament was overawed and adjourned. Troops were poured into the city on the 7th of June, and yet that evening the rioters burnt both the Fleet Prison and the King's Bench Prison as well as the distilleries and dwellings of Mr. Langdale, a Roman Catholic, and were kept from the Bank of England only by the fire of the soldiers. It was the most terrible night London has ever known. At one time the city was on fire in thirty-six places, which with the fierce shouts of the rioters, the firing of the troops and the groans of the dying, made a scene not soon to be forgotten.

When morning came nearly 500 rioters had been killed or wounded and the outburst was over. But a French invasion, of which the English had always lived in such fear, could not have been worse than this assault which the English lower and middle classes inflicted on their own capital city. The next day London looked like a stormed and sacked town. All business, public and private, had ceased. Houses, shops and public offices were closed. Troops guarded the streets among the smoking ruins and silence reigned in the busiest thoroughfares.<sup>a</sup>

If it had happened among a distant people it would have been an act of barbarism, a proof of incapacity for civilization and self-government. It was a striking comment on the nation that was attempting to rule India, Ireland and America in the interests of benevolence and good order; and coupled with the Wilkes riots of a few years before, it raised some serious reflections in even the staunchest Tory breast. But when a week after that terrible night, when Lord George Gordon had been landed in the Tower, the news of the glorious victory at Charleston was received, accompanied by descriptions of deeds of true British valor, there was a revulsion of

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<sup>a</sup> Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iii, pp. 417-424.



## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

fresh hope, joy and enthusiasm. The empire still lived; its magic was still potent for conquest; and the protecting arm of British trade and profit would finally encircle all the American states.

In America there was, of course, renewed depression and gloom, and, even before news of the fall of Charleston had arrived, Washington's letters had again begun to speak of "inevitable ruin" unless there was some speedy change in the situation. In May, although good weather had arrived, there was another starvation period, of such severity that two regiments mutinied.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. viii, pp. 250, 257, 261 and note, 285, 288, 291, 293, 294.



## LXXXI.

### NEW JERSEY INVADED, GIBRALTAR RELIEVED AND ENGLAND AGAIN SUCCESSFUL IN THE WEST INDIES

IN June, 1780, after the fall of Charleston was well known in the North, a detachment of five thousand men from the British army in New York invaded New Jersey, under command of Knyphausen, Robertson and Tryon. They advanced as far as Elizabeth and Connecticut Farms, where one of the regulars shot a Mrs. James Caldwell, the wife of the Presbyterian minister of Elizabeth, while she was sitting in her house with her children. The house with about a dozen others and the Presbyterian church were then burnt to the ground. The deed was said to have been an act of vengeance for the pronounced patriotism of Caldwell, who had been very active in inciting the people of New Jersey to resistance. But the killing of Mrs. Caldwell was said by the loyalists to have been accidental, the result of a random shot.

Nothing more was attempted by the expedition, which shortly returned to Elizabeth. Its object was to test the effect of the fall of Charleston, and the accuracy of information received by the British, that Washington's army was mutinous and ready to desert, and the people of New Jersey weary of the contest and willing to accept British rule. The patriot army was undoubtedly mutinous in two regiments; but it arose from suffering and starvation not from disaffection to the cause. The patriots of New Jersey were also suffering from raids, warfare and the depredations of their own troops, but were not ready to give up the contest.

About two weeks afterwards, when Clinton returned from the South, he appears to have thought that the experiment had not been sufficiently well tried. He invaded New Jersey in heavy force, while some of his troops threatened West Point.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

A large part of Washington's army was immediately moved from the neighborhood of Morristown to West Point and Greene moved down to Springfield with about a thousand men to check the invasion in New Jersey. Greene's troops, on the 23rd of June, protected Springfield for a considerable time, in the most gallant manner, at the bridge in front of the town; and inflicted heavy loss upon the overwhelmingly superior British force. But they were finally obliged to retreat behind the town to some hills, to which the British, after their experience at the bridge, were disinclined to follow them. Clinton made no attempt to reach Morristown or the patriot magazines; but contented himself with burning Springfield and then returned to Elizabeth whence shortly after he passed over to Staten Island.<sup>1</sup>

The remarkable success with which his opponent, Greene, had handled a small force against superior numbers greatly increased that officer's reputation, already deservedly high since the Battle of Germantown. He now began to appear as one of the most accomplished men that had been produced by the war. His little Battle of Springfield, the unequalled ardor and discipline of his troops, and the total absence of the expected despondency in the patriot party as a result of the fall of Charleston were commented upon by Burke, in his usual happy manner, when he wrote the *Annual Register* for that year.

"The matter of fact was, that the loss of Charles-Town produced a directly contrary effect to that which might have been expected. For instead of depressing and sinking the minds of the people, to seek for security by any means, and to sue for peace upon any terms, the loss being now come home to every man's feelings, and the danger to his door, they were at once awakened to a vigor of exertion, scarcely to be expected in the circumstances." (*Annual Register*, 1781, chap. ii, pp. 18, 19.)

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<sup>1</sup> Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iii, pp. 368-374; Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. viii, pp. 309, 310 note, 311, 313 note, 321 note; J. J. Boudinot, "Life of Boudinot," vol. i, pp. 187-189; Moore's Diary, vol. ii, p. 285; Stedman, "American War," vol. ii, p. 240.

## ADMIRAL RODNEY

It was another instance to show that the loyalist party, which England was always expecting to rise and rule the country for her, was so largely composed of neutrals, indifferents, and mere money-makers, that no number of British victories would arouse it. The patriots on the other hand, were determined, as Greene afterwards said, "to defend themselves from age to age rather than give up their independence."

England, however, could now afford to be well satisfied with conditions in the South, and with the work of her navy during the first six months of 1780. In January one of her fleets had captured and burnt a large part of a convoy and three French men-of-war. In March, a running fight between a French and an English squadron off Monte Cristi left the French in a rather shattered condition, although they saved their convoy.

A fresh admiral, George Brydges Rodney, soon to become one of the famous naval commanders of England, had now in this year, 1782, taken charge of Great Britain's fleets in West India waters. He was passed sixty years old, gouty, irritable, but exacting and severe in discipline. He had been in the service from childhood, and, though known to be capable, had never distinguished himself. "Throughout his whole life," says one of his biographers, "two passions—the love of women and of play—carried him into many excesses."<sup>2</sup> Like not a few officers of the army and navy, he had for a long time been a member of Parliament; at first as the nominee of a pocket borough; but at last, when thrown upon his own resources, he secured his election for Northampton by the expenditure of £30,000. This, with his love of play, afterwards reduced him to bankruptcy. He fled to France in 1775 to avoid his creditors; and it was not until 1778 that a friendly loan by the Maréchal de Biron enabled him to return to the British navy.

The corrupt administration of the navy by Lord Sandwich, a violent Tory, was driving the best officers into retirement. Whigs or moderate Tories, like Howe, Barrington and Keppel,

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<sup>2</sup> English Dictionary of Nat. Biog., vol. lix, p. 86.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

refused high command, because their honor, they said, was not safe under such a chief. Rodney, though a strong Tory, was quarrelling with Sandwich; but was compelled by poverty to serve under him.

Rodney was now sent to the relief of Gibraltar which was reduced to considerable distress by the siege of the Spaniards. He was lucky enough, when only a few days out, to capture five French war-ships with a convoy of fifteen merchantmen containing ample supplies of provisions, which he sent to the garrison at Gibraltar. That garrison continued to hold out against all the devices of the Spaniards, and it remained the British bulwark at the entrance of the Mediterranean.

Continuing on his cruise, Rodney on the 16th of January encountered an inferior Spanish squadron off Cape St. Vincent and fought a rather memorable action with it, which lasted until two o'clock in the morning of a dark stormy night. Besides the combined terrors of war and tempest, the ships were in constant danger of the shoals of St. Lucas upon which one of the vessels was lost. A Spanish vessel of seventy guns and six hundred men blew up and sank with all on board. But the Spanish, in spite of heavy losses and inferior force, fought with the greatest heroism and four of their ships escaped. The remaining seven were either taken or lost and the admiral made a prisoner.

Rodney pressed on to the West Indies in search of other victories, and on the 17th of April, succeeded in bringing to action a French fleet under Admiral de Guichen. Both fleets were stretched out in line. The British had the weather gage and sailed down upon the enemy to bring them to the formal fleet engagement. Rodney led, and his flag-ship fought the French admiral's ship supported by two others for an hour and a half, when the French admiral and his seconds bore away. But Rodney's captains failed to support him and he lost what he considered "that glorious opportunity of terminating the naval contest in those seas."

The French line was broken and their ships retired; but

## MOBILE TAKEN

Rodney's vessels were too badly crippled and too much scattered to pursue. It was accounted, however, an important British victory and these five months of continuous success were an earnest that Rodney might be capable of still greater victories in the future.

Against his achievements, America, France and Spain could offset a great success in the capture in August of a large British convoy of sixty-three sail carrying troops and supplies to the West Indies. It was the heaviest single blow English commerce had ever received. Besides this there was only the taking of Mobile, which was then in West Florida. The expedition was organized by De Galvez, the energetic Spanish governor of Louisiana. When he first set out his ships were wrecked in Mobile Bay, the crews and men escaping almost naked and with the loss of a large part of their guns, ammunition and provisions. But they refused to give up their enterprise, made scaling ladders of the wrecked vessels, and being reinforced by part of a regiment and some ships from Cuba, they had no difficulty in overcoming the small English garrison at Mobile before succor could reach it from Pensacola.<sup>3</sup>

In European diplomacy, a movement had been started which, for the rest of the war, united the continental nations of Europe more and more strongly against England. The British had for a long time claimed and exercised the right to seize the vessels of any nation which were found carrying supplies to the ports of a country with which England was at war. The Dutch had for a long time been assisting the Americans and were now carrying warlike supplies to France. In January, 1780, a British captain seized some Dutch vessels carrying timber and naval stores to France, and fired on the Dutch war-ships which convoyed them. This raised the question whether the time was not now opportune for united action by

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<sup>3</sup> *Diary and Letters of Thomas Hutchinson*, vol. ii, p. 340; Gordon, *"American Revolution,"* edition 1788, vol. iii, pp. 401, 405-409, 411, 412; *Annual Register*, 1780, chap. 9; *Writings of Washington*, Ford edition, vol. viii, pp. 294, 295; Stedman, *"American War,"* vol. ii, pp. 188, 255, 263; Clowes, *"Royal Navy,"* vol. iii, pp. 448-463, 473, 477, 478.



## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

European nations to stop England's arrogant methods. The suggestion is said to have originated with the King of Sweden, but the Empress Catherine of Russia had for some time, under the instigation of the other interested powers, been its principal advocate. She now on the 26th of February, 1780, announced the new doctrine that ships of a neutral nation may carry to a belligerent all commodities except arms and ammunition. The United States, France and Spain immediately accepted the doctrine. Denmark, Sweden and Russia supported it by an alliance, called by the rather curious phrase, the Armed Neutrality, because they agreed that if a ship of any one of them suffered from a violation of the new rule, the navies of all three would retaliate.

It was quickly seen that if America failed to win her independence England would become so powerful that she could afford to ignore this new rule that "free ships make free goods." That argument became a powerful lever in the hands of our ambassadors Adams and Franklin. They never wearied of suggesting it; they kept it before the powers day and night, until in the public mind of all the continental nations the cause of American independence and the safety of European commerce were one.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Manning, *Commentaries on the Law of Nations*, Amos edition, 1875, pp. 323-351; Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iii, p. 402; Stedman, "American War," vol. ii, pp. 257-263; Anderson, "History of Commerce," edition 1700, vol. vi, p. 362.

## LXXXII.

### THE FRENCH FLEET AND ARMY LOCKED UP IN NARRAGANSETT BAY

IN May, 1780, with Georgia and South Carolina conquered and Washington's army unable to do anything but hold the Hudson Highlands, the patriot party were looking anxiously for help from Europe. Although a large part of the South seemed lost, the northern states were still independent and free from occupation except the town of New York and the adjacent counties. It seemed to the patriots that there was still hope of salvation if assistance could be obtained from Holland, and possibly something from Frederick of Prussia or Catherine of Russia, in response to the efforts of the envoys that had been sent to those countries.

The French Court had, however, warned the Congress that England also had agents and emissaries in those countries *working hard* against the American envoys and employing the utmost endeavors to persuade the European nations that there was no use in helping the United States, which would never become really independent and would soon agree to a compromise by which they would remain a part of the British empire. The American patriots must remember, said the French Court, that they were in a dangerous situation; for France could not risk her great interests in the West Indies by sending fleets and armies to the American continent. The American patriots must learn to fight their own battles and protect themselves.

The great danger to them now lay in the diplomatic situation, which might produce at any moment an "armed mediation" of several of the powers to stop the war. France and Spain would have to accept the terms of that mediation; and it might not be favorable to American independence; for so long as British forces occupied any part of the United States

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

the mediating powers might not be willing to ask England to withdraw from a country which she already occupied.

In other words, the patriots must not rest content with controlling the greater part of the country, and assuming that lapse of time and European intervention would give them the rest. They had organized themselves as thirteen states, but so long as England held two of them, Georgia and South Carolina, and the principal city, New York, in a third, European diplomats would regard the whole country as still legitimately hers; and as a matter of fact, she had now more absolute control in it than at any other time during the war. The Congress, the patriot party and the generals, must exert themselves to drive the British from every part of the United States or they would surely lose their independence.<sup>1</sup>

But what could they do? Where were they to obtain the men, the money and the supplies? They had already sent to the Carolinas all the northern troops that could be spared, and they could now hardly obtain enough men to enable Washington to hold the Hudson Highlands. As spring advanced, the remains of his small army was found destitute of equipment and stores of every sort. Supplies that had been contracted for were not furnished because the contractors, seeing no prospect of payment, refused to carry out their agreements. The horses that had been put out to winter had starved to death or were unfit for use; and the few supplies that were on hand could not be hauled where they were needed for want of wagons.

The Congress, however, issued a powerful appeal to patriots and to the state governments. They must not appear contemptible in the eyes of their great ally. All the European nations were watching to see what Americans could do. This must be the last campaign of the war and must drive the last British soldier from the continent.

In Philadelphia, the patriot women formed themselves into a society called "The American Daughters of Liberty,"

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<sup>1</sup> Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iii, pp. 335-339.

## FAILURE OF SUBSCRIPTIONS

begged war subscriptions from house to house, and made shirts for Washington's destitute troops. But so completely exhausted was the country and the patriot party by five years of war, that all these efforts of Congress and of individuals failed to give any material increase to the army. The subscriptions raised by the utmost exertions of the patriot women, amounted to a mere trifle. They were given paper money and collected \$300,000 of it, which at the rate of depreciation of that time, 40 to 1, was equal in actual value to only \$7500. On the 4th of July, more than six months after the appeal had been made, Washington reported that only a few unimportant reinforcements had been received and that the patriot governments in some of the states had not even informed him whether they would do anything.<sup>2</sup>

Beneath all this failure and gloom, however, the Congress and Washington were nourishing a magnificent hope, which had to be kept secret for several months. Lafayette had gone to France the year before and had labored hard to persuade the French Court to change their policy of confining their exertions exclusively to the West Indies. He also had to overcome a prejudice against sending troops to America. It had been believed by both Washington and the Congress that, while naval assistance from France would be gladly welcomed, it might be unsafe to bring French land forces into the interior of the country, where the people had not yet forgotten their wars against the French in Canada. Lafayette had ardently opposed this idea, and his final proof of its fallacy was one of his best services to the American cause.

In May, 1780, he returned from France and reported in secret to Washington and the Congress that the French King had finally consented that an army and a fleet should be sent direct to the United States. But the troops and the fleet had

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<sup>2</sup> Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. viii, pp. 323, 324 notes; vol. ix, pp. 113, 138; Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iii, pp. 362-364, 375, 376, 390; W. B. Reed, "Life of Joseph Reed," vol. ii, appendix.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

not arrived or even started; their coming must be concealed from the English; and until they should actually appear upon the coast not a whisper of the good news must get abroad.

Washington immediately became enthusiastic over what seemed to him a brilliant opportunity. By detaching so many troops to conquer South Carolina, Clinton had left New York quite weak. He had, of course, relied upon the patriot force remaining as it was. But if it should now be increased by a French fleet and army, Clinton might be beaten in detail first in South Carolina and then at New York.

Washington quickly drew up plans for effecting this double stroke. He hoped that the siege of Charleston would not be raised. He wanted it prolonged so that the French might fall upon Clinton while still absorbed in his parallels and trenches; and his letters earnestly explaining this to General Lincoln are quite pathetic, in view of what happened.

Copies of all his plans, and most polite letters to the French admiral, were placed in the hands of officers stationed along the coast as far south as Virginia, who were to go out to the fleet in small boats as soon as it was sighted. Careful arrangements were also made to furnish the fleet with pilots. Washington particularly urged, if the French first arrived on the northern coast and were willing to attack New York, that the attack be made instantly before the town could be reinforced. He knew that the fleet would be tempted to run into Newport, which was such an easy place, in those times, for sailing vessels to enter; and he begged that this should not be done; but an instant attack made upon New York, which had scarcely any war vessels protecting it.

If the French would do this, he believed that in spite of the depressed state of the patriotic party, he could raise 30,000 troops, or some large number, for the sudden emergency as had been done at the time of the Battle of Long Island.<sup>a</sup>

But many weeks passed away. Washington on the 1st of

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<sup>a</sup> Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. viii, pp. 264-284, 301, 304; Sparks, "Writings of Washington," vol. vii, pp. 32, 477.



## RENEWED DISAPPOINTMENT

June heard of the fall of Charleston. The French could, therefore, do nothing in that quarter; and everything now depended on their reaching New York before Clinton could return from the South and reinforce it. Washington was full of anxiety and was striving to make preparations; but no patriot troops could be raised in spite of the most earnest appeals. The resources of the patriot party were exhausted.

This brought about an unexpected and mortifying change of plan. The fleet, when it arrived must be told that nothing could be done to second their efforts. In fact, the few troops on hand, including their officers, were so ragged that it was a question whether it would be well to let the French see them.<sup>4</sup>

On the 18th of June, it became known that Clinton had returned to New York from the South. He and the Ministry had all along had complete knowledge of the preparation of the fleet in France, its starting and the probable length of its voyage, so that Clinton had been able to time his movements with exactness, and there had never been any chance for the success of Washington's plans. The state of affairs was now very black; and there was considerable discussion among the members of the Congress as to the advisability of abandoning South Carolina and Georgia, letting the British have them without question, and concentrating all energies on saving the independence of the North and possibly gaining Canada.

"It is possible," reported Luzerne to the French Court, "that the British will make a proposition to the ten northern states tending to assure their independence; and their scheme will be to form into a new government the two Carolinas, Georgia, East Florida and the Bahama Islands, which together would make a respectable possession." (Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. 8, p. 325 note.)

At last, on the 10th of July, the French Admiral de Ternay, with ten war-ships, convoying thirty-two transports with six thousand troops under Rochambeau, arrived at Rhode Island, sailed into Narragansett Bay and settled down snugly for a long stay at Newport. To prevent misunderstandings between

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<sup>4</sup> Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. viii, pp. 313, 318, 333, 334.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

the two commanders a commission had been sent appointing Washington a lieutenant-general of France, which put Rochambeau under his orders. The town was illuminated to receive them. Complimentary addresses were presented by patriot committees from the interior; and Rochambeau in replying declared that his force was merely the vanguard of a much greater one that was coming to the aid of America. Contrary to all expectations the French troops became very friendly and popular with the New Englanders. They refrained from every kind of offence and were models of neatness, sobriety and good order.

The coming of the fleet and army to America had been made possible, it seems, by the sailing to the West Indies of a Spanish fleet of twelve vessels, and eighty-three transports, carrying eleven thousand troops to join with France in expelling the British from the islands; and this reinforcement was expected to restore to France and Spain the superiority in those waters.<sup>5</sup>

As soon as Washington heard of the arrival of the French fleet he sent Lafayette to consult with both Admiral de Ternay and General Rochambeau and arrange a plan for attacking New York about the 5th of August. But so well had the British Ministry timed their movements that three days after the arrival of the French at Rhode Island a British squadron of six powerful war vessels under Admiral Graves arrived in New York, giving Clinton a decided naval superiority in that town, which he had already reinforced with the troops he had brought from the South.

But Washington would not give up hope; for the other French fleet and land force was said to be on the ocean and when that arrived the French would surely have a naval su-

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<sup>5</sup> Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. viii, pp. 304, 313 note, 316 note, 318, 319, 325, 327, 328, 341, 342, 343, 349 note, 355, 363; Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iii, pp. 379, 384, 417, 425; Chastellux, "Voyage de Newport," &c.; Journal of Claude Blanchard; Stedman, "American War," vol. ii, p. 245; Niles, "Principles and Acts of the Revolution," edition 1876, p. 254.

## EQUIPOISE OF WASHINGTON

periority over Clinton. At the same time we learn that Washington's army was reduced to such straits that he was trying to borrow two hundred tons of powder and five thousand muskets from the French fleet, and unless we obtain these supplies he says, "we certainly can attempt nothing." He had not even muskets enough for the few recruits which had recently been obtained. And yet at this time, when the weakness of the patriot cause had become deplorable, when the Congress had thrown the responsibility on the patriot governments of the different states, and those states were either indifferent or helpless, when Arnold was preparing to desert the sinking ship and others no doubt thinking of similar plans, we can find no undignified or petulant word in Washington's letters. It was one of the occasions when his long practised equipoise became superb.

When Clinton learned on the 18th of July that the French fleet had reached Newport, he instantly moved eight thousand of his troops out to Throg's Neck on the shore of Long Island Sound, to be put on transports and make a sudden descent upon the French before they could prepare fortifications or be reinforced by militia. He also hoped to accomplish this blow so quickly that he could return to New York before Washington could attack it weakened by the withdrawal of eight thousand of its defenders. But the British admiral was slow in bringing the transports to Throg's Neck. The troops were not embarked on them until the 27th; and hearing that the French were making great preparations to receive him and that Washington, guessing his design, had already started to threaten New York, he took the troops across the sound to Huntington Bay, disembarked them on Long Island, whence they hastened back to defend New York.<sup>6</sup>

A portion of the British fleet then sailed for Newport and, making a base in Gardiner's Bay on Long Island, blockaded the French war vessels and kept them locked up in Narragansett Bay for the next year. This was possible, because another Brit,

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<sup>6</sup> Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. viii, pp. 364--375.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

ish fleet of thirty-two ships of the line had in like manner locked up the second French fleet in the harbor of Brest, before it started from France. There is no denying that this was masterly work on the part of both Clinton and the Ministry. Having learned all about the preparation of these two French armaments, they took advantage of the mistake the French made in sending them separately. If the two had been combined the English could have done little or nothing against them. The combination would certainly have been superior to the English war vessels and army at New York, which might have been taken by an American and French assault, and the war perhaps abruptly terminated.

But the French armaments being widely separated were easily disposed of. A great Spanish land and naval armament had been sent out to the West Indies and had joined the French fleet of the Count de Guichen; and it had been expected that this combined force after inflicting the greatest damage on the English islands would go to the American continent and make sure of Washington and Rochambeau driving the British from New York. But like the great combined fleet under D'Orvilliers it did nothing in the West Indies. Sickness among the crews, it is said, destroyed its efficiency. The Spanish fleet and army went to Cuba and De Guichen convoyed a fleet of merchantmen to Europe. Lafayette's good work in procuring assistance from France seemed now as if it had been wasted; and Clinton was free to hold New York and go on with his southern conquests.

When Washington had crossed to the east side of the Hudson and moved down to threaten New York during Clinton's short absence, he had wanted Arnold to command the attack and was surprised to find him unwilling and making excuses of his old wound and lameness, which would prevent active duty in the field. He was therefore put in charge of West Point, which was, it seems, exactly what he wanted.

The news that the second French fleet and army had been shut up for an indefinite period in the harbor of Brest, was brought to Boston on the 16th of August by the "Alliance"



## MORE DISAPPOINTMENT

under her insane Captain, Landais, who had marred the fight between the "Bon Homme Richard" and the "Serapis" by firing indiscriminately into both vessels. Up to that time both Washington and Lafayette had been full of confidence in an attack upon New York and persistently urged it upon Rochambeau and the Admiral. Washington was profoundly disappointed and according to English reports lost for a moment "that composure of countenance and equanimity of temper for which he was so much distinguished." He feared, Rochambeau says, that this campaign would be the last the patriots could make and "he wished at any hazard to risk an attack upon the enemy in their stronghold while he had the French troops at his disposal."<sup>7</sup>

The French officers were, however, no doubt right in refusing to attack without the second division, or such decrease in Clinton's force of ships and men in New York as would give the Americans and French an unquestioned superiority. The French could not afford to lose ships, for on their ships depended their West India possessions; and it would be risking too much to attack a superior British fleet in New York harbor.

There was nothing to do but let the high hopes of the patriots fall flat. The French troops at Newport could not be used elsewhere, because they must remain at Newport to protect the French fleet from a combined naval and land attack by Clinton. Indeed, there was no use in attempting to use these troops elsewhere so long as there was no American or French naval superiority on the coast. Everything for the rest of the war depended on which side had the naval superiority. The patriots had no navy, and had it not been for their expectations in this regard from France, they would have had to succumb.

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<sup>7</sup> Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. viii, pp. 382, 383, 375, 400-402, 403 note, 408, 414 note, 410, 448; *Annual Register*, 1781, chap. 2; Stedman, "American War," vol. ii, pp. 245-247, 270; Pontgibaud, "A French Volunteer in the War of Independence," pp. 85, 80; Clowes, "Royal Navy," vol. iii, p. 469.



## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

Washington abandoned all his plans, began to reduce expenses and worry over the old question of starvation. Sometimes he was glad that no recruits had come, because there would have been nothing on which to feed them. It was always a problem with him, whether to have more men and no food, or fewer men and a chance for them to live. The Congress and the states having almost ceased from furnishing either men or provisions, his supplies of food and forage had been obtained by forcible seizures, from loyalists when possible, but when they were exhausted, from the patriots. How much longer this could be done without alienating the whole population and destroying the basis of the patriot party, was a question.

The French admiral wrote that "the revolution is not so far advanced as has been believed in Europe." The possession by the English of two of the southern states, from which it seemed impossible for either America or France to move them, cut down the ideal of American independence. Even a compromise arrangement would now affect only the North. The South would be more absolutely colonial and subservient than it had been before the war.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. viii, pp. 383-400, 405-407, 410-412, 415, 417, 419, 421, 422, 423 note, 432-435, 436 note, 437, 307, 408, 470, 477 note, 478, 479, 505; vol. ix, pp. 13, 17, 45, 46, 48, 53-55, 57-62, 73, 79, 80, 110, 116, 137, 139-142, 165.

## LXXXIII.

### THE DISASTER AT CAMDEN

AFTER the French Government had warned the patriot party that they must do more for themselves and rely less on the alliance, the Congress, in April, 1780, at the suggestion of General Gates, sent some Maryland and Delaware troops to the South. They numbered only fourteen hundred effectives, and were merely the nucleus of an army which it was hoped would receive large reinforcements from the southern militia, and move upon the British in South Carolina. Baron De Kalb, who commanded them, was a foreigner not yet accustomed to American conditions, and in July he found himself no farther than Buffalo Ford on Deep River in North Carolina, without reinforcements, and under the necessity of detaching most of his troops to hunt for provisions and gain subsistence from the lean cattle which roamed through the woods.

Meantime, the Congress, despairing of his doing anything, had appointed General Gates to the command of all the patriot forces in the South. He had been so successful in drawing together in New York the large body of troops which brought Burgoyne to a surrender, that it was supposed he would be equally efficient in organizing the southern militia against Cornwallis.

Gates began his unpromising undertaking on the 25th of July, and acted with great promptness. He kept De Kalb as commander of the Delaware and Maryland troops, and met with some success in collecting North Carolina militia. Buffalo Ford where he found himself was in the modern Chatham County, and he was advised by Colonel Williams, and some other officers, to move westward to Salisbury and Charlotte, make his headquarters there, and then march against Camden in South Carolina by way of Waxhaws, through a fertile coun-

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

try inhabited largely by patriots. This suggestion was rejected and Gates decided upon going by the shorter way to Camden as more calculated to inspire confidence in his men. But the route lay in a loyalist country of pine barrens and sand hills, interspersed with swamps, the same region in which the modern winter health resorts, Pinchurst and Southern Pines, are situated. The air of that region is dry and invigorating, but the troops of Gates needed more than air to sustain them. They had to live on unripe corn, green peaches in place of bread, and a few starved cattle they shot in the woods. Some of them made soup with the white powder which the revolutionary soldier, no matter how ragged and destitute, always carried to dust over his long hair tied in a queue.

The British had not yet completed their pacification of South Carolina. Camden, their important interior post, was not strongly protected, and if Gates took it their interior control would be broken and they would have to retire to Charleston. They had not dreamed of such a force as that of Gates coming upon them. He seemed to have a rare opportunity to strike a heavy blow; and if he succeeded the combination of such a victory with that of Saratoga would give him a most enviable reputation.

Lord Rawdon, a stripling officer of twenty-five years, commanded at Camden, and advanced to meet Gates as far as Lynch's Creek; but fell back as Gates approached. On the 13th of August Gates had encamped within thirteen miles of Camden and the next day received a reinforcement of seven hundred Virginia militia. He had now about three thousand men and was not without hope that Lord Rawdon would abandon Camden as he had abandoned the outposts.

But as Gates had come for the purpose of an aggressive attack he could not wait, and on the night of the 15th of August, at 10 o'clock, his army marched to surprise and assault the British. He had no cavalry and made the mistake of supposing that they were useless in the South. His men were hungry, and having no rum, he gave them molasses, which made most of them sick, and caused much confusion and break-

## BATTLE OF CAMDEN

ing of ranks in the night march. Yet the expedition had good prospects of success, for there were only about two thousand British to defend Camden. Unluckily Cornwallis had returned to Camden the day before, and considering that a retreat, though justifiable, would be very injurious to the British interest, he marched his whole force to attack and surprise the Americans at the same time that they marched to attack him.

The two forces met about 2 o'clock in the morning to the great surprise of both sides, and there was desultory fighting during the rest of the night in which one of Gates's best officers, Porterfield, was disabled and sent to the rear. When morning came Gates had his army posted between two marshes which protected his flanks, and his officers in council would not suggest a retreat.

The original plan had been completely frustrated by an unforeseen contingency; and Gates was now in a position not of his own choosing, and into which he had been forced by circumstances. The force opposing him, according to the account of a prisoner, was about three thousand; but the returns of Cornwallis give the number as twenty-two hundred and thirty-three, while Gates had present and fit for duty, three thousand and fifty-two. The English troops, though inferior in numbers, were old regulars, and when their superior discipline is considered it cannot be said that there was any advantage on the side of the half-starved raw militia of Gates. Many of his officers were no doubt in favor of a retreat, but no one would be the first to propose it. When Williams suggested that General Stevens's militia brigade should begin the attack upon the British, Gates assented and Williams immediately ordered the movement.

The British instantly replied to this movement by charging, firing and huzzaing. The raw militiamen, who had been living for weeks on half-ripe corn and green peaches, were panic stricken, threw down their loaded arms and fled back upon the main army with such precipitation, that the whole was disorganized and no efforts of officers, or the heroic conduct of De Kalb, who fought until he sank under eleven wounds, could



## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

stop the retreat. Individual brigades and regiments fought with desperation, and the Maryland and Delaware Continentals sustained their reputation and gave the enemy a check. But the formation and organization of the army was broken and individual valor was of no avail. Cornwallis, seeing the demoralization, ordered the cavalry of Hanger and Tarleton to charge and that completed the rout.

Gates and Caswell, who commanded the North Carolina militia, hurried to the encampment of the previous day at Clermont, hoping to be able to rally the flying troops, but it was impossible. The farther the troops fled the more they dispersed, pursued by bands of loyalists who killed or captured some of them and took others to their homes under promises of remaining neutral during the war. The American baggage fell into the hands of the British, who continued the pursuit for twenty miles; and for forty miles the roads are said to have been strewn with arms, baggage, sick, wounded and dead.

In England it was regarded as the greatest British victory of the war, because the Americans were said to have had a greater superiority in numbers than in any other battle. Cornwallis had reported the disproportion as 5000 to 2000, and in Ross's edition of the Cornwallis correspondence, the disproportion is stated as 7000 to 2000. The King expressed the highest satisfaction in this victory over such large numbers. But he was very grievously mistaken in this as in other matters relating to Cornwallis. Gates, as we have seen, had only about 800 more men than Cornwallis; and this apparent advantage was more than made up by the superiority of the British in discipline and equipment, as well as in having had enough to eat.

For the patriots it was a disastrous defeat, completely breaking the organization of their southern army and scattering the men so far and wide, that the number of our killed and wounded has been difficult to ascertain. The artillery, ammunition and most of the baggage and wagons were captured, and according to Cornwallis, there were one thousand killed and eight hundred prisoners. But Gates put the killed,



## DEFEAT OF SUMTER

wounded and missing at only seven hundred and the British loss as five hundred killed and wounded.<sup>1</sup>

Gates, who had now become a general of a remarkable victory and a remarkable defeat, retired with Caswell and other officers to Charlotte, where he established a rendezvous for his scattered army, and there was a prospect for a time of collecting them, and with reinforcements again assailing the British. Colonel Sumter, who had borrowed four hundred of Gates's troops, had succeeded in capturing one hundred prisoners and a convoy of British supplies on their way from Charleston just as they were crossing a ferry on the Wateree close to Camden. This victorious little force of Sumter's might be made, Gates thought, the nucleus round which a new army would rally. But as Sumter was on his way with his spoil to join Gates, he stopped near Fishing Creek to rest his tired men, who had had but little sleep or food for four days. They were suddenly surprised in this position by the energetic Tarleton, who dashed into the American camp with his cavalry before Sumter's videttes could rouse their sleeping comrades. It was another of Tarleton's clean sweeps, and those of Sumter's men who were not killed or captured were scattered in the woods and swamps, wandered to other parts of the state or joined other partisan bodies.<sup>2</sup>

All hope of rallying the militia was now gone, and Gates considered it dangerous to remain in Charlotte. The remnants of the patriot army were moved to Salisbury, and officers sent out to direct the fugitives to the same place, whither patriot

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<sup>1</sup> Narrative of the Campaign by Otho H. Williams, printed in appendix of Johnson's *Life of General Greene*; Ross, *Cornwallis Correspondence*, vol. i, pp. 55, 56; Gordon, *American Revolution*, edition 1788, vol. iii, pp. 391, 429-447; G. W. Greene, *Life of General Greene*, vol. iii, pp. 15-31; B. F. Stevens, *Clinton-Cornwallis Controversy*, vol. i, pp. 250, 290; Draper, *King's Mountain*, p. 504; Tarleton, *Narrative*, pp. 104-109, 131-135; Lee, *Memoirs*, vol. i, p. 193; Sparks, *Correspondence of the Revolution*, vol. iii, pp. 66, 76; Stedman, *American War*, pp. 204-211; Lamb, *American War*, p. 303.

<sup>2</sup> Tarleton, *Narrative*, pp. 112-116; Gordon, *American Revolution*, edition 1788, vol. iii, p. 447.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

families, wounded, starving, soldiers in every form of pain and dejection, and the tribe of Catawba Indians, were soon marching to escape from the British and the loyalists. From Salisbury Gates took the motley crowd northward to Hillsboro, where they were comparatively safe.

This abandonment of Charlotte was afterwards considered by General Greene as entirely unnecessary, and he blamed Gates for this movement much more than for his defeat at Camden, which he regarded as more or less excusable. The defeat at Camden would, in Greene's opinion, have been readily forgiven by the patriot public if it had not been followed by the abandonment of Charlotte and the retreat northwards to Hillsboro.<sup>3</sup>

Soon after Gates arrived at Hillsboro, he had the satisfaction of learning that on the same day that Sumter's command had been destroyed, another South Carolina partisan, Colonel Williams, had defended himself at Musgrove's Mills on the Enoree River against 500 loyalists and regulars and driven them off with heavy loss. But the attempt of Gates to save the South for patriotism had evidently failed. Cornwallis had a stronger hold than ever. Georgia was safe. In South Carolina the patriots were completely broken; the patriot legislature dared not meet and the patriot governor fled from the state. South Carolina was strongly held by the British at Charleston and by a well garrisoned line of forts and cantonments following the Santee River from Georgetown at its mouth to Camden in the interior.

With the French suffering continual defeats and kept from giving any direct assistance to the patriots, who could do nothing but hold the Hudson Highlands, and with Georgia, South Carolina and New York strongly occupied by the British, there seemed every probability, if this situation was continued, that the patriot party would be worn out and compelled to accept such terms as the Ministry might offer.

The southern members of the Congress were now in favor of trying to secure more aid from Spain by abandoning to her all

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<sup>3</sup> Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iv, p. 98.

## CLINTON'S SUCCESS

our claims to the free navigation of the Mississippi River. Whatever may have been their courage and their protestations or their determination to resist to the last, it is doubtful if there were any of our people, not even Washington himself, that had in his heart any real hope for independence. Even a bad compromise, more unfavorable than the last one offered by the Ministry, would now be hard to obtain; for so long as she was in actual possession of the South, England could dictate severe terms.

It was a crucial time, the acme of Clinton's success, and he attempted to follow up the crushing defeat of Gates by a blow which, if it had succeeded, would in all probability have postponed American independence for half a century.

## LXXXIV.

### ARNOLD'S CONSPIRACY

For more than a year Clinton had been preparing for this grand stroke. Early in the year 1779 he had found that some important American officer was secretly communicating with him. Clinton continued the correspondence, which was carried on for him by his adjutant-general, André, the accomplished young Frenchman of Mischianza fame. In the summer of 1780, when the French army arrived at Newport and Gates was defeated at Camden, Clinton learned that his rebel correspondent had been placed in command of West Point, the most important patriot fortress on the Hudson, the key to the important strategic position for which all had been contending, and that he was ready to arrange for surrendering to the British this Gibraltar of the patriots, their only stronghold, to fortify which they had used their utmost efforts, and which covered their principal stores of military supplies.

General Arnold, who was prepared to make this surrender, was in many respects the most heroic and able field officer in the patriot army. The perfection of his courage and physique, his skill in horsemanship and pistol practice had always won him the admiration of both men and women. But from the beginning of his career we find strong evidences of great dislike for him in the Congress and among the officers of the army. He was continually quarrelling with his brother officers. There was considerable evidence of his having seized the goods of merchants in Canada and sold them for his own profit. In spite of his distinguished services, the Congress appointed above him five junior major-generals, which has universally been regarded as great injustice, for which no reason has ever been given, except that many of the patriot party detested him.

This dislike was probably due to Arnold's quarrelsome dis-

## CHARACTER OF ARNOLD

position, his frantic desire to acquire reputation, and later his obvious loyalism and something in his manner, which was no doubt that overbearing and insolent tone which the loyalists imitated from the English. Of plain origin and conscious of deficiencies in speech and manners, he was almost insane with social ambition, and such an ambition was, at that time, one of the strong motives to loyalism. His desire for sudden wealth, and his desire to be in the most conspicuous fashion of the time, formed a consuming passion, which overwhelmed both his judgment and his morals.<sup>1</sup>

When he was placed in command of Philadelphia in June, 1778, after its evacuation by the British, his real character and opinions instantly came out in a strong and conspicuous light. He associated exclusively with the loyalists who had spent the previous winter with the British army. He became extravagant in his style of living, and went into extravagant and reckless speculations to support it. He showed all the usual symptoms of a man whose consuming ambition is social position and attention. He quarrelled with all the patriot leaders, and it was easy to do that because they despised him for the bearing he had assumed among the loyalists. They could not endure anything he did, even when it happened to be right. He soon became engaged to be married to Miss Margaret Shippen, one of the most attractive and prominent of the young loyalist ladies who had been so delighted with the visit of the British. It was a good marriage for his purpose. Her people were of that stripe of loyalists who would not leave the country, and yet clung to everything English in the hope that Britain would save them from independence and the rights of man on the one hand and the French monarchy on the other.

It is easy to understand how a man of Arnold's ability and force, in chief command of an important town, could, from his association with fashionable loyalists, put on an air and tone towards Reed, Mifflin, Robert Morris, and other patriot

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<sup>1</sup> Codman, "Expedition to Quebec," pp. 150, 284; Wilkinson, *Memoirs*, vol. i, pp. 47, 49, 58, 70-75.



## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

leaders that was unbearable. They also, very likely, saw in his loyalism a strong tendency to treachery. They made desperate attempts to get rid of him, drive him out of the army, and ruin him, without giving any strong or reasonable ground for their action.

They charged him with improperly admitting a ship into port, with using public wagons for carrying private property, of having improperly allowed people to enter the enemy's lines, of having improperly bought off a law suit, of having imposed menial offices on patriots, and of having improperly made purchases for his private benefit. They laid these charges before the Congress and sent them broadcast all over the country to the governors and legislatures with a purpose which is obvious.

Arnold demanded an investigation, and the committee of the Congress which was appointed found all the charges groundless except granting the pass and using the public wagons; and, as in these two instances there appeared no wrongful intent, they acquitted him of all the charges. Arnold now resigned from the army and soon after married Miss Shippen. But Reed and the others who had been in close contact with him in Philadelphia would not relent. They brought the subject again before the Congress, which recommended a trial by court-martial. The court-martial was appointed and made the same decision as the committee, except that it recommended that Arnold be reprimanded, because in the matter of the pass and the wagons, which were used to save private property from the enemy, while entirely guiltless of a wrong intent, he had been somewhat imprudent.

The reprimand was evidently intended as a sort of compromise which would partially satisfy Arnold's persecutors, check their further proceedings and save Arnold's services for the patriot army. Washington delivered the reprimand with the greatest gentleness and forbearance.

Prominent men among the patriots, like Washington and Gates, shielded Arnold as much as they could, regretted the apparent injustice that was done him, and tried to soften his asperity and indignation, because they would not, if they

## HIS LOYALIST OPINIONS

could help it, lose his invaluable services. He had won such distinction at the Battle of Saratoga, and was so badly wounded, that Congress was obliged to square accounts and give him the rank to which he was fully entitled.

But nothing could stop his inevitable tendency. The French alliance, the increasing demoralization of Congress, and the increasing anarchy and devastation throughout the country made him more of a loyalist than ever, or at least gave him excuses for avowing his loyalism. He finally said that he had not been in favor of the Declaration of Independence, although, as he explained, he had acquiesced in it as a means of carrying on the war and obtaining "redress of grievances," which was all for which, in his opinion, it was worth while to fight. He also professed to be influenced by the fear, entertained by so many loyalists at this time, that America would fall into the hands of France, unless reunited with the British empire.

He had been for some time preparing to do what thousands of loyalists would have been glad to do if they had united to high ability a nature as treacherous and unscrupulous as his. He was determined by one fell stroke to stop the war, preserve the integrity of the British empire, put loyalism and loyalists in the ascendant, and give himself imperishable renown and an exalted station in England.

In July, 1780, when Washington wanted him in the field to attack New York, he preferred to have the less active command of West Point, and it was at once and gladly given to him. The events of that summer—the ruinous defeat of Gates at Camden and the locking up of one French army in Newport and another in Brest—were particularly favorable to his purposes. There was every human probability that the surrender of West Point with its three thousand men, leading inevitably to the breaking of Washington's whole position in the Hudson Highlands, would end the patriot cause.

In September, just before the news of the disaster to Gates had reached the North, Arnold and André were preparing the last details of their plan, and on the night of the 21st of September they arranged for a final meeting. André came up the

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

Hudson in the British war-ship "Vulture," and Arnold sent to the "Vulture" a boat in charge of Joshua Smith, a lawyer of means and prominence who lived in that region, and one of the numerous persons who were not quite sure whether they were patriots or loyalists. The boat, by the testimony of both Arnold and the captain of the "Vulture," carried a flag of truce. André, however, said it carried no flag when he returned in it.

The boat took John Anderson, as André had been called in the correspondence, to a thicket of trees on the river shore, about four miles below Stony Point, where he met Gustavus, as Arnold was called. André was in his uniform and wore a light cloak or overcoat.

Here we see the first slip in this most important plan of Clinton to end the war, this plan of most extraordinary luck and accidents. André, an attractive, fresh-faced young Anglo-Frenchman, of pretty accomplishments and parlor tricks, could superintend *Mischianza* tournaments and fireworks or write clever verses. He had, it is said, done some work as a spy at the siege of Charleston and entered the town in disguise.<sup>2</sup> But he was unfit for this terrible enterprise with Arnold. It was a mistake for him to go ashore. He could have arranged to have Arnold come on board. The captain of the "Vulture" tried to restrain his impatience and dissuade him from going on shore, but to no purpose.

The arrangements of the details of the surrender in the shadow of the thicket consumed the whole night, and as daylight appeared the boatmen refused to take the risk of a return to the "Vulture." André was persuaded to walk about a mile up the shore to the house of Joshua Smith, and there he and Arnold took their breakfast.

While they were breakfasting, the "Vulture" was fired upon by Colonel Livingston's battery on the other side of the river and forced to fall down the stream, which was another accident unfavorable to Arnold and his plans. After break-

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<sup>2</sup> Munsell, "The Siege of Charleston," Albany, 1867, p. 115 note.

## SKINNERS AND COWBOYS

fast Arnold returned in his barge to his headquarters, having first given to André papers describing the fortifications, the signals to be given by the approaching British force, and the method of sudden and unexpected surrender. These papers André concealed in his stockings and waited at Smith's house all day.

When night came Smith thought it unsafe to try to take André in a boat to the "Vulture." He offered to take him by land all the way to New York, and André reluctantly consented. He disguised himself in some of Smith's clothes, crossed the ferry to the east side of the Hudson, and in company with Smith pursued his way on horseback towards the British lines at White Plains. He was within the American lines in disguise and with papers on his person for the betrayal of a fortress. Clinton had especially warned him against the disguise and the papers because they would constitute him a spy in the full meaning of the word.

Nevertheless, he and Smith, by the aid of passes which Arnold had given them, passed successfully by patriot guards and even stopped and talked with them. As they approached the neutral ground, however, they feared to enter it and stopped at a farm-house to sleep for the rest of the night. The neutral ground between the two armies was infested by "skimmers," so called because they usually stripped and robbed their victims, and by "cowboys" who seized cattle for the British army. The "skimmers" called themselves patriots, and the "cowboys" professed to be British; but they were both alike marauders who levied tribute and plundered quite indiscriminately.

The next morning Smith conducted André a little distance into the neutral ground and then returned to report to Arnold. This was another accident, for if Smith had continued to fulfil his task André would undoubtedly have escaped to New York.

Even alone he would in all probability have reached New York and carried out all of Arnold's plans if he had not made an unfortunate turn in the road. He was getting on successfully and had even met with and talked to several patriots. But something a boy told him about scouts ahead led him to

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

alter his course, and when near the present Tarrytown he was stopped at the roadside by three skimmers, Pauldings, Williams, and Van Wart, who were playing cards and watching for plunder and vengeance on some cowboys, who had killed and robbed a neighbor some days before.

When André artlessly said that he hoped they were of "the lower party," which meant the cowboys, they said they were, and one of them pointed to his Hessian coat. André then foolishly announced himself a British officer on important business. They ordered him to dismount and told him they were Americans. He then helplessly changed his ground and showed Arnold's pass; but in spite of it they searched him and finding the papers in his stockings, declared him their prize, to be delivered to the nearest patriot officer.

They took from him his watch, money, horse, and equipment, which were divided among them and afterwards sold. André offered them large rewards if they would take him to New York, and increased the offer until it is said to have reached £1000. But after consultation among themselves they refused it and carried him to Colonel Jameson, the nearest patriot commander.

They were young men, all under twenty-three, and their refusal of the large bribe has been usually credited to their sterling virtue. They were rewarded by Congress with pensions and gifts of land. But it is only fair that the reader should know that their virtue was denied by many people familiar with the circumstances, and particularly by Major Tallmadge, who maintained that they disregarded the bribe because they had no faith in its being paid. They consulted a long time about it, and decided that the risk was too great. If they allowed André to enter New York, or even if they kept him concealed and sent a messenger with the letter he offered to write, no arrangement for receiving the reward could be made that might not also involve a detachment sent out to capture them. If they had seen the least prospect of safely receiving the reward, or any substantial part of it, Tallmadge believed that they would have let André enter New York. They saw more



## ARNOLD ESCAPES

profit in the immediate spoil of the prisoner and in turning him over to the nearest American officer. While they had served as militiamen in the patriot army they were regarded as bad and indiscriminate marauders, and some of the people of the neutral ground accused them of being cowboys as well as skimmers.<sup>3</sup>

Colonel Jameson was astounded when they delivered to him their prize with the papers. He was unable to believe that Arnold was a traitor. There must be, he thought, some honest explanation, and he innocently sent André with a guard accompanied by a letter of explanation to Arnold, and sent the papers to Washington. André had now a good chance of escape if he reached Arnold. But not long after the guard started Major Tallmadge reached Jameson's quarters, and his remonstrances induced Jameson to send after the guard and bring back André, which was accomplished when André had only about an hour between himself and freedom. Jameson, however, insisted on letting the letter of explanation go to Arnold.

The game was now up. André was sent to Washington. Arnold received the letter when at breakfast, waiting for Washington and his staff, who had just returned from an interview with the French general, Rochambeau, at Hartford. With superb coolness Arnold read the letter, ordered his barge manned, said that he had been suddenly called across the river, and went up-stairs. His wife followed him and fell fainting at the announcement he made. He called a maid to attend her, rushed down to his barge, and displaying his handkerchief as a white flag, was rowed to the British war-ship "Vulture."

He was rewarded with a gift of at least £6315 in money, which was a fortune in those days. His wife was given a pen-

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<sup>3</sup> Abbatt, "Crisis of the Revolution," p. 31; Benson, "Vindication of the Captors of André," pp. 10, 24, etc.; De Lancey's note to Jones, "New York in the Revolution," vol. i, pp. 730, 737. See, also, *Pennsylvania Magazine of History*, vol. xxii, p. 410; Sargent, "Life of André;" Arnold, "Life of Arnold;" J. J. Boudinot, "Life of Boudinot," vol. i, pp. 192-203; Boynton, "West Point," chap. 7; Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. vii, pp. 417-420; vol. viii, pp. 444, 445 note, 449 note, 455 note.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

sion of five hundred pounds a year, and each of his children one hundred pounds a year. He had also a command in the British army with perquisites and opportunities. Although some of the Whigs avoided his company, he was well received by the Tory aristocracy and the King, and his family finally married into the peerage. He accomplished a large part of his ambition. Had he succeeded in surrendering West Point, he would have no doubt been made a peer. His sons entered the British army, and his descendants still occupy positions of respectability in England, devoting themselves to the enlargement of the British dominion, which was the only cause their ancestor had had at heart.<sup>4</sup>

Soon after his escape to the "Vulture" he published an explanation of his conduct, describing his leaning towards loyalism, and his disapproval of the Declaration of Independence, except as a mere means of obtaining a redress of grievances. He denounced the persistence in war and the attempt to dismember the British empire after the peace terms of 1778, which, he said, offered all the redress of grievances which the patriots had originally demanded. He denounced also the alliance with France, "a monarchy too feeble to establish your independence so perilous to her distant dominions; the enemy of the Protestant faith, and fraudulently avowing an affection for the liberties of mankind while she holds her native sons in vassalage and chains."

He announced that henceforth he would devote himself to the reunion of the British empire; and it is probable that there never had been any other project to which he could be sincerely devoted. America and American life had become hopelessly commonplace to him; and the patriot party, conquered as he supposed, was still more repulsive. As to the infamous method he had attempted to use in taking leave of the patriots, he had no excuse to offer, except that if a blow was to be struck the vastness and importance of the issues at stake justified the

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<sup>4</sup> *Magazine of American History*, vol. iii, p. 678; Gordon, "American Revolution," vol. iv, p. 101.

## ANDRE A SPY

striking of the most heavy and telling blow that could be given.

His nature was of that cold, unfeeling character, which could execute a deed of infamous treachery and experience no mental suffering. It has been assumed in modern times that he must have been tortured with remorse, and in his last hours he is supposed to have spoken mournfully of his patriot uniform, which he had kept, and said that he was sorry that he had ever exchanged it for another. But Washington never believed that he felt any regret. He had accomplished a large part of his object, fortune and distinction in England, where such treachery in support of imperial conquest must necessarily be well rewarded, and where social rewards were, in his opinion, greater than in America.

"I am mistaken," said Washington, "if at this time Arnold is undergoing the torments of a mental hell. He wants feeling. From some traits of his character which have lately come to my knowledge, he seems to have been so hackneyed in villainy and so lost to all sense of honor and shame, that while his faculties will enable him to continue his sordid pursuits there will be no time for remorse." (Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. 8, p. 494.)

As for poor André, he had been within the American lines in disguise, with papers in his stockings revealing a plan to capture West Point. British officers and British historians have usually maintained that he was a mere prisoner, protected from execution by the flag of truce, which Arnold and the captain of the "Vulture" declared was carried by Joshua Smith when he brought André ashore. But André himself settled this question. The board of officers appointed to try him asked him if he had come ashore from the "Vulture" under a flag; and he frankly replied that he had not, and had never considered himself as under the protection of a flag. There was, therefore, nothing that could be done except to hang him as a common spy.

It was one of the saddest and most pathetic scenes in all history. André's French delicacy, frank courage, and charm of manner won the hearts of his captors and of all the patriots in a way that would have been beyond the power of any Englishman. He should have been on the American side, as the rest of

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

his countrymen were. As it was, his utter incapacity for such an enterprise as that of Arnold's had saved the Americans from ruin, and was, perhaps, another debt they owed to France.

Crowds of people from all the country round—men, women, and children—came to see him die. Most of them would have torn Arnold limb from limb, but they were weeping over André. Everything he did charmed them; the touching letter he wrote to Washington asking to be shot instead of hanged; the outline of his beautiful, slender figure as he stood upon the gallows; his arranging with his own hands the noose around his neck and turning down his collar. No patriot could be found who would perform the task of executioner. They had to procure one of the half-way loyalist breed, who blackened his face and disguised himself, so that he could never again be recognized.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> See also Heath, *Memoirs*, p. 235; *The Northern Invasion of 1780*.

## LXXXV.

### TRAITORS AND DOUBLE SPIES

THE patriot cause had never been so close to absolute ruin as at the time of Arnold's conspiracy in September, 1780. Every circumstance of the time indicates the narrow margin by which we escaped. On the 20th of August Washington had written that he could scarcely keep his army fed from day to day. That summer had been as difficult to endure as the winter at Valley Forge. "It will appear miraculous," he said, "if our affairs can maintain themselves much longer in the present train."

When, shortly after writing this letter he set out with his staff to meet General Rochambeau at Hartford and see what assistance could be obtained in the future from the French army, which had been so long locked up at Newport, he and his officers borrowed all the money they could obtain to pay their expenses in riding through Connecticut. They procured \$8000 in the paper currency, but so depreciated was this money that they had expended more than half the eight thousand before they had ridden out of the state of New York. They were pained and annoyed to think that on an excursion of such ceremony and importance to meet the distinguished officers of their allies, they would be unable to discharge even their ordinary tavern bills, and they were greatly relieved when they found that the Governor of Connecticut had given orders that they should be at no expense for anything while in his state.<sup>1</sup>

Washington strongly suspected that there were not a few others in the same state of mind as Arnold and deterred only by timidity or lack of opportunity. There were undoubtedly a

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<sup>1</sup> Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iii, pp. 478-480.



## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

very large number of people in New York and Connecticut who were playing a double game, dealing with both sides and furnishing information to both. There was an illegitimate traffic in goods with the British in New York which was made use of for spying by both sides. While only one monstrous traitor was discovered there were innumerable small ones; and the most curious character among them, a really extraordinary product of the times, was William Smith, Jr., a prominent lawyer of New York, who has been described for us by Judge Jones who knew him well. Smith had taken a prominent part with the patriots and had been known as "patriotic Billy." But in 1778, thinking that he saw the signs of the times, he had gone over to the British while at the same time, it is said, he kept up his connection with the patriots and furnished them with information. For the rest of the war he kept himself on good terms with both sides by the practise of a subtlety and cunning which *one would not expect to find outside of the novels of Balzac or Dumas*. His large estate in New York, Judge Jones says, was never confiscated by the patriots, although loyalists in the same class lost every penny. Having ingratiated himself sufficiently with the patriots to retain his American wealth, he ingratiated himself sufficiently with the British to secure an English income; for besides being the confidential adviser of General Clinton the Ministry appointed him Chief Justice of New York during the British occupation, and after the Revolution made him Chief Justice of Canada, with a comfortable salary.<sup>2</sup>

The secret service, or spy system, of the British army was in charge of an adjutant, and André had held that office when he conducted negotiations with Arnold. On the American side, Washington kept personal control of a system of his own, managing in his own way all the emissaries; and besides that the revolutionary committees and even prominent patriots, civilians and political leaders, as well as military officers, obtained information for their own purposes through private spies. It was a

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<sup>2</sup> Jones, "New York in the Revolution," vol. i, pp. 147-149 and title "William Smith, Jun.," in index; Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. viii, p. 455; vol. ix, pp. 247-249.

## DANGER OF DOUBLE SPIES

war of spies and a close contest; for both sides seem to have had very full and accurate information and neither gained in this respect much advantage over the other. Ordinary information by the spy who goes within the lines in disguise, walks about and reports what he sees or overhears, was not difficult to obtain. But the deepest secrets, plans in the Congress, or among Clinton and his officers could only be reached by out and out treason or by the slight step from it, that most desperate and cunning of all emissaries, the double spy.

In Washington's letters we find that he took great pains that the real names of some of his emissaries should never under any circumstances be known; and no doubt for the reason that they had taken such part in the British service, or furnished so much information to the British, that they could never afterwards satisfactorily explain their double life in any community in which they might live..

The double spy had to be of service and furnish information to the enemy only just a little short of the information he obtained from them. In no other way in that close contest could really valuable knowledge be obtained.

A curious instance of a man who played a very romantic and desperate double part, though not altogether a spy, and yet was able to explain it afterwards, was the young sergeant who was sent into the British lines immediately after the discovery of Arnold's treason. Washington had received information from two of his most reliable sources in New York that Arnold was not alone in the base conspiracy just detected, but that the poison had spread, and that a major general, whose name was not concealed, was certainly as guilty as Arnold.

Deeply agitated by this information, Washington sent hastily for Harry Lee, of the Virginia Legion of picked cavalry, and asked him to furnish a man who would investigate this information which might, it was thought, be a mere trick of the British to destroy Washington's confidence in some of his best officers. Accepting the enemy's spy and filling him with false information was a subtle plan which Washington himself had practised.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

The man whom Lee was to furnish was also, with the aid of emissaries already in New York, to seize Arnold and bring him to the American camp in time to save André from execution. It was certainly a compliment to Lee and his Legion that they were expected to contain a man who must have a large part of the ability of an accomplished actor, all the self sacrifice and devotion of the most exalted patriot and unusual physique, courage and discretion. Arnold must be brought in uninjured and alive. Washington sternly forbade the least thought of assassination, which would only discredit the patriot cause.

Sergeant Champe, twenty-four years old, of powerful frame and tried courage, "with a saturnine countenance, grave, thoughtful and taciturn," was selected, and he lost scarcely a moment after he received his instructions. It was already night and he took his horse from the picket in the darkness and deserted, riding at full speed down the west side of the Hudson to join the British. In one sense it was a terribly real desertion; for such was the high spirit of the Legion that the men needed no authority from court-martial proceedings to dispose of the case of a deserter. Champe narrowly escaped a patrol a few minutes after he left, and in half an hour his crime was known to his comrades.

They found the foot marks of his horse, and knew them instantly by the private mark which was on all the fore shoes of the horses of the troop. They took up his trail like dogs, and the pursuit was the fast and furious dash of trained southern cavalymen, the same men who appear to have suggested some of Cooper's most vivid descriptions in "The Spy." Lee, meanwhile in pathetic anxiety for his favorite subordinate, had exhausted his ingenuity to delay and misdirect them by excessively zealous orders.

Champe had intended to join the British at Paulus Hook; but when morning broke he had not quite reached Bergen, and he saw his pursuing comrades only half a mile behind him. They soon cut him off from Paulus Hook by taking a shorter road and occupying the bridge. But he had turned through

## SERGEANT CHAMPE

Bergen and like a cunning fox confused his trail in the well beaten streets of the village. Finding they had failed at the bridge, the whole pack came galloping into the village and spread out all over it to pick up the lost scent. Soon two or three were yelping on the trail again and saw their game riding towards the shore, strapping his travelling bag to his shoulders, and throwing away his cloak and sword scabbard. He abandoned his horse, plunged into the river and swam towards two British galleys, calling loudly for help. The galleys replied with shots at the pursuers, sent a boat to his aid, and he was welcomed on board and sent to General Clinton in New York with all the evidence of an ardent deserter.

In a long conversation with Clinton, he was necessarily obliged to furnish a good deal of correct information and ended by telling the general that such was the spirit of defection in consequence of Arnold's example, that proper measures to encourage desertion would bring off hundreds of American soldiers, including some of the best troops horse and foot. To his infinite disgust, though in entire accord with the object of his mission, he was assigned to General Arnold and obliged to enlist in his Legion, which was largely composed of American deserters and loyalists. He soon discovered that the information Washington had received of the treasonable guilt of one of his major generals was incorrect. He reported this back to Washington, through whose spies he seems to have had no difficulty in quickly transmitting information to the American headquarters and receiving replies and further instructions. With one of the spies he arranged an admirable plan to take Arnold, who strolled in the garden of his house every night before going to bed. He was to be seized, gagged and carried as a drunken soldier by Champe and the spy to a boat at a wharf. From the wharf a confederate would row them across to Hoboken to meet Lee and some troopers, who had been warned to wait at that place till daylight.

Unfortunately, André by promptly confessing himself a spy brought his trial to an end much sooner than was expected and he was executed before Champe and the spy could seize Arnold.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

Deeply disappointed at not being able to save André, which had been a strong motive, Champe, nevertheless, attempted to finish his work. But on the day before the one he had fixed upon, Arnold moved his quarters to another part of the town and his Legion, including Champe, were transferred to transports preparatory to a raid into Virginia. In Virginia Champe finally got a chance to escape and after many wanderings and vicissitudes joined his old comrades in their South Carolina campaign, and was well rewarded by Washington for his devotion.<sup>3</sup>

The most interesting double information dealer, whose history leads to considerable knowledge of the times, was William Heron, a patriot member of the Connecticut legislature. In spite of his official position as a legislator, he habitually visited New York, ostensibly on his own private affairs, but principally as a most astute and successful spy. But which side he favored is now somewhat difficult to determine.

From the patriot point of view he usually spied in the service of General Parsons, whose Connecticut troops formed part of Washington's army; and Parsons professed to have a high opinion of him, described his "meaningless countenance" as a great advantage, recommended him to Washington and guaranteed both his integrity and ability.

The first evidence we have of his double methods is an account of a long interview on the 4th of September, 1780, between him and General Robertson, the British military governor of New York; and this interview Robertson thought important enough to report to England to Lord George Germain.

"He lives at Reading in Connecticut, came in with a flag—returns this afternoon. He has had every opportunity he could desire to be acquainted with the public affairs and especially of that colony. Till last April he was in Assembly and a member for the county; . . . is now in office respecting the public accounts. He ever was an enemy to the Declaration of Independence, but he said little except to the most trusty

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<sup>3</sup> Henry Lee, *Memoirs*, vol. ii, pp. 159-187.



## HERON'S METHODS

Loyalists. He stands well with the officers of the Continental Army—with General Parsons he is intimate and is not suspected." (New York Colonial Documents, vol. 8, p. 804.)

Heron gave Robertson a great deal of information of the sort usually brought in by loyalists and spies;—numbers, position and movements of the patriot troops, efforts and methods of recruiting, opinions and arguments of various people, discontent at the length of the war, jealousies and animosities, debt, general impoverishment, and failure of the paper money.

"Mr. Heron is confident the whole rebellion must fall soon from the internal weakness of the country in general, and the still greater weakness of the party that have hitherto fomented the troubles, who lose ground every day, and divide from each other. All subdivisions are for peace with Great Britain on the old Foundations. . . . Undoubtedly the majority of the continent have long been for a reunion with Great Britain. From his intimate knowledge of Connecticut, he is firmly persuaded that not a tenth of the inhabitants are for contending for the Independency, if well assured by Government, that their charter shall stand good."

The next evidence we have of Heron is about eight months afterwards on the 21st of April, 1781, when he went over to Long Island and in trying to enter the British lines was seized with his boat and crew by an officer who did not know him. But as soon as he could communicate with some higher official he was promptly discharged from custody and allowed to enter the lines to "transact business in his own private affairs;" and in the correspondence involved the officer who had arrested him says casually in a letter to another British officer, "as soon as those things wanted by General Parsons shall arrive I will not fail to send them to the General by another flag."<sup>4</sup>

Whether Heron had arranged that something should be sent to his friend General Parsons does not appear. The words are entirely ambiguous; but have been the cause of much suspicion, because a few days afterwards, on the 24th of April, 1781, Heron writes a letter to the British Secret Service Bureau and the day after visits that bureau and has a conversation with

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<sup>4</sup> *Magazine of American History*, vol. 12, p. 168.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

the adjutant in charge, from which it appears that Heron had been employed to corrupt General Parsons and persuade him to furnish information and surrender a post to the British as Arnold had tried to do.

Heron reported from time to time afterwards the efforts he was making, and their partial success. He had cautiously suggested to Parsons that in the present desperate straits an alliance with France, the enemy of the Protestant religion, and the most perfidious nation in Europe, was too dangerous to America to be longer continued. It would be better to compromise with England; and Parsons was told that any aid he could give would be "amply rewarded both in a lucrative and honorary way besides a provision for his son." He was reminded how well Arnold had been already rewarded, although his plot had not succeeded, and Heron was instructed,

"To hold up the idea of Monk to him, and that we expect from his services an end to the war. That during the time he continues in their army, he shall have a handsome support, and should he be obliged to fly, to remind him of the example and situation of Arnold." (*Magazine of American History*, vol. xi, p. 65.)

Monk, when in command of the Parliamentary army in the Cromwellian rebellion in England, had turned over the army to the royalists, ended the war and revolution, and restored the house of Stuart to the throne. His name was not infamous in England; nor would any infamy attach to the Arnold or the Parsons, it was said, who should, in like manner, end the war in America.

It was an argument which, in the critical juncture of affairs, would seem far more plausible than it now seems after our Revolution has become successful. Parsons, as Heron reported, listened to it and began furnishing information which was conveyed by Heron to the British Secret Service Bureau, now in charge of Major Oliver DeLancey, a loyalist.

Parsons was urged to do more than furnish information, He must surrender some fort or men committed to his care, and various rewards were suggested. But Heron reported him

## SUSPICIONS OF PARSONS

unwilling to go farther than "to communicate any material intelligence, to inculcate principles of reconciliation and detaching his subordinate officers from the French connection." If, however, said the diligent Heron, the patriot affairs should grow worse, Parsons would very likely be willing to surrender a post or men. It was all a question of success; "for were he sure independence would take place his prospects as a general officer would be so great from the country that they would outweigh every other consideration."<sup>5</sup>

Parsons, if we can believe Heron, was calculating chances to a nicety. Not of a bold and desperate mind like Arnold, he was pursuing the shrewder course of continuing to serve both sides so that whichever failed he could claim recognition from the victor and save his family from poverty and disgrace. Heron's reports on the subject keep appearing up to the 15th of July, 1781, in Clinton's "Record of Private Daily Intelligence" of the Secret Service Bureau. The book closes with the 19th of July of that year and no more volumes have been discovered. But almost a year afterwards, on the 4th of March, 1782, Heron wrote a letter dated at New York to General Clinton, giving a great deal of information of patriot doings and in the postscript of it he says:

"I have kept Gen. P.—s in a tolerable frame of mind. . . . he was somewhat chagrined when I returned from this place last October, yet I am convinced that in endeavoring to serve you he has (since) rendered himself in some measure unpopular. . . . his frustrating the expedition concerted by Talmage against Lloyd's Neck, his being an advocate for Loyal subjects and his being ready to communicate whatever comes to his knowledge of the secrets of the cabinet are facts which are indisputable." (*Magazine of American History*, vol. 20, pp. 331, 332.)

A month after this letter to Clinton, General Parsons, having resigned from the American army, writes a letter to Washington recommending Heron to him as the most intelligent and capable patriot spy within his knowledge. Heron, he said, was

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<sup>5</sup> *Magazine of American History*, vol. vi, pp. 62-65, 254, 257, 347-351, vol. xii, pp. 163, 164, 166-170.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

an Irishman and had a fellow countryman and friend who was an officer in the British secret service department. From this friend Heron frequently obtained important and interesting intelligence and "that he has access to some of their secrets a few facts will show beyond a doubt."

"Your Excellency will remember I informed you of the contents of a letter you wrote to Virginia which was intercepted a year ago but not published. This letter his friend showed him. Of the descent made last year on New London, I was informed by him and made a written representation of it to the Governor and council three days before it took place. This he had through the same channel. He has frequently brought me the most accurate descriptions of the posts occupied by the enemy and more rational accounts of their numbers, strength and designs than I have been able to obtain in any other way. As to his character I know him to be a consistent national whig; he is always in the field on every alarm and has in every trial proved himself a man of bravery; he has a family and a considerable interest in this State and from the beginning of the war has invariably followed the measures of the country." (Hall's "Life of General Parsons," pp. 418, 419.)

Such was the character of a double spy in the Revolution. It should be added that Heron had been again elected to the Connecticut legislature in the spring of 1781 and after the Revolution closed was continued in that position for seven years.

As to his having corrupted Parsons, it will be observed that in his letter to Clinton of April, 1782, he mentions three facts as indisputable evidence that Parsons was assisting the British cause. The first was that Parsons had frustrated the expedition by Tallmadge against Lloyd's Neck. Lloyd's Neck was a broad promontory on the north shore of Long Island where the British had a post and fort which was used to protect the illicit trade with Connecticut and assist the transmission of intelligence from loyalists and spies. Tallmadge wanted to break up this nest, and obtained permission from Washington in April, 1781. He makes no complaint of being frustrated by Parsons, but says that he applied to the French army and fleet at Newport to assist him and abandoned the expedition because the French could not furnish him with ships. In October of

## CHARACTER OF PARSONS

the same year Parsons planned a similar expedition, but was frustrated by General Heath.<sup>6</sup>

The second fact Heron says was that Parsons was an advocate for loyal subjects; but we have no evidence of this. There is nothing of that nature in Parsons' letters, which are all earnestly patriotic as well as among the best expressed writings of the Revolution, and with their strong distinct signature give a very favorable impression of grasp of mind and integrity.

The third fact of "his being ready to communicate whatever comes to his knowledge of the secrets of the cabinet" is unsupported by any evidence within our knowledge, except a letter which Heron turned over to the British Secret Service and said was from Parsons to him. It gave the position of some of the patriot troops in the Hudson Highlands and the location of their most important magazines. The signature Heron had cut off and we have nothing but his word to show that Parsons ever wrote such a letter.

Heron was constantly telling the secret service office that Parsons wanted money, and could not be held without money; but no money seems to have been paid; and apparently the information obtained was of such small value that the British would pay nothing for it.

General Parsons, though not often mentioned in history, was a valuable officer. He had organized the expedition that took Ticonderoga in 1775; and after the Revolution was well rewarded by the patriot party with offices and honors. He was appointed by the Congress in 1787 one of the judges of the Northwest Territory. In 1789 Washington made him chief justice of that territory and he was one of the Connecticut commissioners who made the treaty with the Wyandott Indians extinguishing their title to the Western Reserve of Ohio. When Clinton's secret service book was published for the first time in 1883 and the other evidence against him collected, Americans were shocked and surprised at the revelation. But a more care-

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<sup>6</sup> Memoirs of Col. Bentj. Tallmage, p. 43; Hall, "Life of General Parsons," pp. 404-408.



## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

ful review of the situation seems to show that Heron was really a patriot spy, and that he talked to the British about Parsons merely to promote himself in their good graces and seem to be furnishing them with what they wanted at a time when they had expected so much from the treason of Arnold.

There is really not a spark of evidence against Parsons except what Heron is reported to have said about him; and Heron was a regular practitioner of deception in a desperate and dangerous game. He had to be of service to the British, furnish them with information and seem on the eve of furnishing them with a great deal more, or as a member of the patriot legislature, he would never have been allowed to pass freely in and out of their lines. In order to get at their deepest secrets he would have to take his chances whether he gave more than he obtained; and very likely it was sometimes one way and sometimes the other.<sup>7</sup>

It was a trying state of affairs in those years 1780 and 1781 and the depths of human nature were stirred. It is probable that there was some one in the Congress, or in the inner circle of patriot counsel, who furnished valuable information to the enemy; for Clinton's knowledge of every detail of our plans and policy was accurate and complete, and as shown in the notes to Clinton's "Private Intelligence," corresponded almost word for word with the instructions sent by the Congress to Washington.<sup>8</sup>

As we read on in the "Private Intelligence" we suddenly find that General Sullivan, now in the Congress, had become so alarmed over the gloomy prospects that he was anchoring to windward and expressing a willingness to favor reconciliation. Like some other members of the Congress, he was facing abject penury and he knew not what to do. The British learning of his condition, approached him through his brother, who was

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<sup>7</sup> Parsons is ably defended in Hall's life of him, chapter 24; and also by G. B. Loring in "Vindication of S. H. Parsons."

<sup>8</sup> *Magazine of American History*, vol. xi, p. 441 note.

## SULLIVAN AND LUZERNE

their prisoner; and Sullivan gave an account of the interview to Luzerne, the French minister.

"They regard me," he said, "as the fittest man to negotiate a reconciliation between the mother country and the English colonies; that they wish me to make known my sentiments on this subject, . . . that I have only to state my wishes, . . . and that I may count on the profoundest secrecy" (*Magazine of American History*, vol. xi, p. 158.)

He had rejected the offer with scorn, he said, but had not told the Congress of it "partly in order not to compromise my brother, partly in order not to make a parade of my own disinterestedness, and partly because I thought it hazardous to announce with too much positiveness to my colleagues that the enemy was seeking a traitor among us and that his reward was ready." He had, therefore, he said, confided the particulars to Luzerne alone to put him on his guard against the enemy, and also on his guard against the Congress, in which other members had possibly been approached.

The report, however, which his brother gave the British contains no mention of any rejection with scorn of the offer, but on the contrary, a willingness to consider it. Luzerne suspected the part of "rejection with scorn" was confirmed in his suspicion when Sullivan went on to say that he intended to pretend to lend an ear to the overtures, to ask Clinton for a plan of reconciliation, sound the British disposition and "learn how far they intended to go in their concessions;" and he named four members of the Congress to whom he proposed to confide this project.

Convinced that Sullivan's financial straits were leading him into a treacherous enterprise, Luzerne agreed to furnish him every six months with the same sum of money he had lent him the year before, and tried to dissuade him from further intercourse with the British. Sullivan gratefully accepted the money. The previous loan may have led him to give Luzerne the cautiously worded account of his project in order to obtain more money. Luzerne's conduct was approved by the French Government, and he was instructed to continue Sullivan as a

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

pensioner while he remained in the Congress to save him from treason to the cause of American independence.

Sullivan did not formally promise Luzerne to abandon intercourse with the enemy, and some months afterwards in the summer of 1781, his brother reported him to Clinton as of the opinion that unless the French made very great exertions in America this summer, the Congress would be torn to pieces and the people would return to British allegiance; that the Congress was at present in great confusion, and that he was determined to take care of himself.<sup>o</sup>

When we consider all these circumstances of the times, we can appreciate more fully the meaning of one or two sentences in Washington's letters where he reminds some one that he has staked his all on the success of independence and is ready to go down with the cause. In the critical juncture of these last years when any moment might bring the end, when everything might depend on the turn of a hand, Washington had no anchors to windward; but fully conscious of the treachery which surrounded him, turned it to the use of the patriot cause with the subtlety of a Talleyrand combined with the reserved respectability of a young Virginia country gentleman.

Under all the circumstances he did wisely in having a secret service of his own managed by himself, and not trusting to a separate department of unknown subordinates who might do he knew not what. When it came to planning deep work for competent spies, there were few who could regulate it much better than Washington; and he secured as exact and as complete information of Clinton's plans and movements as Clinton obtained of his. There were English officials like Heron's friend, ready to turn traitor at times and reveal something; there were loyalists close to Clinton ready to furnish news in the hope of saving their American property from confiscation; there were doubtful and double-dealing characters of infinite cunning whose motives and desires could be played upon; there

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<sup>o</sup> *Magazine of American History*, vol. xi, 156-160 and notes, 353, 538, 539.

## METHODS OF SPIES

were sincere patriots within the British lines trying to save their possessions. Information could be sent on the margins or blank leaves of almanacs or pamphlets. A letter could be written in loyalist style in ordinary ink and between the lines another letter written in a colorless fluid, which became legible when exposed to heat or an acid. British emissaries, known to be in the American camp, were allowed to remain and filled with misleading information. Human ingenuity was exhausted; and no means of deception left untried in the desperate contest.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> *Magazine of American History*, vol. xi, pp. 58, 60. Clinton's "Private Intelligence" is printed in the *Magazine of American History*, vol. x, pp. 327, 409, 497; vol. xi, pp. 53, 156, 247, 342, 433, 533; vol. xii, pp. 72, 162; Onderdonk "Revolutionary Incidents of Long Island," p. 85. See also Barnum, "The Spy Unmasked;" Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iii, pp. 305, 372; Johnson, "Life of Greene," vol. ii, p. 386.

## LXXXVI.

### HOLLAND JOINS IN THE WAR, THE SUBJUGATION OF SOUTH CAROLINA AND THE MEDI- ATION OF RUSSIA

THE finances of the Congress had been steadily failing; its paper money, with which it kept its armies going, was steadily depreciating, and the time of the total extinction of that money was in sight. Loans had been obtained from various sources in America and Europe, supplies of military equipment obtained from France; but all this was not enough. Both the resources and the credit of the patriot cause kept on sinking; and England was watching this condition narrowly; for if it continued it would certainly end the war.

Even before the time of the French alliance the Congress had adopted the plan of drawing bills of exchange on Franklin to pay the interest on loans, and after the alliance this easy method was continued for all sorts of purposes besides the interest on loans. Franklin paid the bills by applying to them his own allowance or salary and obtaining the rest from the French Government. But as the amounts increased from year to year, with the failing fortunes of the cause, the French Government resisted this unlimited system; and Franklin wrote letter after letter describing the unspeakable anxiety put upon him in his old age by this desperate system. His wonderful popularity in France, his high favor with Vergennes and the Court as well as his health and sanity were strained to the breaking point; and nothing shows his remarkable power as a man, a philosopher and a diplomatist than the way in which he bore this tremendous burden.

In the autumn of 1779, however, depression had reached such a point that even the Congress saw that other methods must be adopted besides the plan of drawing on Franklin



## LAURENS IMPRISONED

and France. As they had no money they adopted the plan of having the States furnish specific supplies of flour, corn, provisions, and cattle to be deposited at certain localities, which might at least feed the troops; and the States were also asked to contribute tobacco because it could be sold for hard money in Europe or exchanged there for material and equipment that could not be obtained in America. A certain amount of produce was collected under this method; but it was on the whole a great failure, because there was no money to pay for hauling the supplies from place to place.

At the same time in the autumn of 1779 the Congress decided that the drawing system, that was gradually killing Franklin, should be extended to two other countries, Holland and Spain, which were also deeply interested in breaking up the British Empire. For this purpose John Jay was sent in September as envoy to Spain and Henry Laurens was appointed agent to Holland in October. In November the Congress drew bills for £100,000 on each, although Laurens had not left the country and some of the bills were presented to him at his home in South Carolina.

Laurens did not leave for Holland until August, 1780. John Adams meantime did the work of obtaining loans from Holland until Laurens should arrive. But Adams kept the position, for the mission of Laurens had a curious outcome. In crossing the ocean he was captured by a British cruiser, taken to England and imprisoned in the Tower of London for the rest of the war on a charge of high treason. He had destroyed most of his papers; but the draft of a commercial treaty, prepared in some previous negotiations with Holland, which he threw overboard with other papers, was rescued before it sank by the British sailors.<sup>1</sup>

The draft of the treaty was signed by William Lee, the

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<sup>1</sup> *Magazine of American History*, vol. 18, p. 1; Sumner, "Financier and Finances of American Revolution," vol. i, pp. 239-246, 247, 249, 250, 252, 253. *Annual Register*, 1781, chaps. viii, ix.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

American agent who had conducted the negotiation for it, and by John de Neufville, a merchant of Amsterdam, acting for Van Berkel, grand pensionary of that city. It was a merely tentative proposal which was only to take effect when America became independent. But England and Holland had long been the great commercial rivals of the ocean. For many generations their navies had fought most desperate engagements. They had signed treaties of amity and friendship, and adopted a diplomatic intercourse of apparent good feeling, which ill concealed their intensity of hatred. In the beginning of the present war the Dutch had secretly assisted the Americans, and were now favoring the French. After the French alliance had been followed by the alliance of Spain with the Americans England demanded that the Dutch fulfil their treaty by which they had agreed to assist England if attacked by either France or Spain. But the Dutch refused compliance, and in March, 1780, the British Government declared all treaties suspended.

The English were longing for an excuse to attack the Dutch, and destroy their trade; and the discovery of this half formed secret treaty with the Americans gave the opportunity. Without waiting for a formal declaration of war, a great parade was made of putting Laurens in the Tower for high treason, the British fleet seized two hundred Dutch merchant vessels with cargoes valued at five million dollars, and on the 20th of December war was declared.

But before news of the declaration could reach St. Eustatius, a powerful British fleet under Rodney hastened to that famous Dutch island. It was a mere rocky patch, only six miles long by three wide; but it had been the centre and seat of the American smuggling trade against the British navigation laws, and recently the source of supplies which, Rodney said, "alone supported the infamous American rebellion." The trade of the island had grown prodigiously during the war, and merchandise lay in piles in the streets. But having only about fifty soldiers, it surrendered, and the British seized and confiscated every article of property on it, public and private, amounting to fifteen million dollars, even the private property

## EUSTATIUS PLUNDERED

of their own merchants. These English merchants Rodney regarded as mere traitors and criminals because they had made money in the illicit traffic with the Americans. They were proper subjects for plunder, he thought; and when they remonstrated he told them, "The island is Dutch, everything in it is Dutch, and as Dutch you shall all be treated." He took one hundred and eighty merchant vessels, seven Dutch men-of-war, about 2000 American merchants and sailors, turned all the people of the island adrift, and left nothing but the bare rocks. He kept the Dutch flag flying for two months, which decoyed into the trap some fifty American vessels loaded with the tobacco which was such a valuable means of obtaining hard money for the patriot Congress.

The spoil was immense. The King generously relinquished the Crown's share to the captors, and Rodney saw a chance for a fortune. He remained for months at the island securing his share of the plunder and leaving the protection of the British West Indies to his subordinate Hood, who had not force enough to resist the French fleet under De Grasse. A large part of the share of the spoil of Eustatius that had been secured by Rodney and his officers was sent to England on 34 vessels under convoy of Admiral Hotham; but he was overtaken by a French fleet under La Motte Piquet, who captured twenty of the ships.

England was striking the Dutch heavy blows and soon after swept up all their settlements on the Demerary and Essequibo rivers in Surinam. In the West Indies Rodney finally left the plundering of Eustatius and joined Hood. They prevented the French from retaking St. Lucia, but could not prevent them from taking the English island of Tobago. It was a close and terrible struggle. The secret hostility to England of Prussia and Russia and the open war of Spain, France and Holland might be supposed capable of crushing the British Empire of that time; and yet those combined enemies appeared to be in no way accomplishing that result. A French expedition against the island of Jersey in the English Channel signally failed with

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

heavy loss. Great Britain was certainly maintaining herself against her numerous enemies with unexampled energy.<sup>2</sup>

Cornwallis was vigorously stamping out patriotism in South Carolina. He directed that those militiamen who had borne arms with the British and afterwards joined Gates, should be hanged; that civilians who had submitted to the British and afterwards joined Gates should be imprisoned, and all their property should be taken away from them or destroyed. The horrible severity, executions and suffering which followed these orders aroused a most violent controversy and discussion which never fails to appear when such methods are used for bringing a people into subjection. Loyalists, like Judge Jones, as well as patriots like Gordon, thought that milder methods would have been better calculated to pacify the people of the South.

But neither Cornwallis, nor Clinton, nor the Ministry under whose instructions they acted, took this view; and indeed all history shows that the passion for independence can be stamped out of a community only by the utmost severity and cruelty. At the surrender of Charleston the continental troops were kept as prisoners; but the patriot militia were allowed to return to their homes on a parole, that so long as they refrained from taking up arms against Great Britain they should remain unmolested in person and property. This parole was afterwards annulled by the British, and the patriot militia were told that the state being conquered, they were British subjects, and were expected to fight with the British army. If they refused they were imprisoned and terrorized by starvation and misery into enlisting or taking the British oath of allegiance.

"Then followed a system of enticement and menace, of corruption and terror, as either seemed best suited to the occasion. It would be long to tell the full story of these disgraceful scenes, how some were tortured by confinement in prison ships in the midst of small pox and putrid fever; how some were sent to languish in St. Augustine, in open violation of the

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<sup>2</sup> *American Historical Review*, vol. viii, p. 683; *Id.*, April, 1894, article, "Frederick the Great and the American Revolution;" Stedman, "American War," vol. ii, pp. 262, 271-274, 277, 279-289; *Annual Register*, 1781, chap. vi; Clowes, "Royal Navy," vol. iii, pp. 480-488; Beatson, *Memoirs*.



## COLONEL HAYNE'S OATH

articles of capitulation, and tortured the while by false stories of American defeat and disaster. It was a trying situation even for the bravest and most resolute. The preservation of their property, the protection of their families, the immediate enjoyment of personal freedom, the apparent hopelessness of further resistance, pleaded warmly with them for submission." (G. W. Greene, "Life of General Greene," vol. iii, p. 355.)

Many yielded and took the oath of allegiance to save their property, or their families. "I sign this hateful allegiance," said Colonel Isaac Hayne, "for my wife and children's sake, loving my country still as I have always loved her." He returned to his plantation where he remained quietly, watching, like thousands of others, for a good opportunity to fight on the patriot side in spite of his oath of allegiance. When the district in which he lived was conquered by the patriots he believed that by the laws of war he was relieved from his oath of allegiance. He fought on the patriot side, was captured by the English, and hung under circumstances which aroused a world-wide controversy, and such indignation among Southerners that a few months afterwards they wanted to retaliate by hanging Lord Cornwallis when he surrendered at Yorktown.

The Ministry approved of all the severity, and said that it would undoubtedly restore allegiance and order in the province. They prepared to send out a lieutenant-governor and instructed Cornwallis to turn the conduct of affairs into the hands of the civil authorities as soon as possible.<sup>a</sup>

A regular system was inaugurated for the confiscation of all the estates of patriots as had been done in Ireland. Prominent and wealthy patriot citizens of South Carolina, officials of the former patriot government, planters and merchants who after the surrender of Charleston had been paroled and were now

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<sup>a</sup> G. W. Greene, "Life of General Greene," vol. iii, p. 357; B. F. Stevens, "Clinton-Cornwallis Controversy," vol. i, pp. 291, 292; Stedman, "American War," vol. ii, p. 214; Tarleton, Narrative, p. 187; Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iii, pp. 454, 480; vol. iv, pp. 102, 164; Johnson, "Life of Greene," pp. 279-285; Lee, Memoirs, vol. ii, pp. 253-273; "Life of Boudinot," vol. i, p. 242, also Boudinot's Journal, p. 59.



## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

living quietly in that town were suddenly seized in the night and carried to St. Augustine, Florida, their houses searched and their papers examined. Their silent influence and example, as well as their secret correspondence, Cornwallis said, encouraged patriotism, and he must get them out of the way in order to bring the country to subjection.

In his negotiations with Spain for further assistance, John Jay had been instructed by the Congress not to yield on the question of the free navigation of the Mississippi River, which Spain was inclined to restrict, as part of the price of her aid. But for the sake of greater assistance from Spain which might relieve the condition in South Carolina and Georgia, the southern members of Congress in the autumn of 1780 favored an abandonment of our claim to free navigation.

At this same time the Empress Catherine of Russia had suggested to the powers of Europe a mediation to stop the war. It is supposed to have been ambition for distinction on her part, rather than any prospect of success, which led her into this movement which was carried on with discussion and exchange of diplomatic documents from the autumn of 1780 until the summer of 1781. England accepted the offer of mediation, hoping that it would weaken patriot and French efforts and bring about a favorable compromise.

To prevent it weakening the patriot cause in the South, the southern members of Congress were ready to buy greater assistance from Spain at almost any price, and the sacrifice of the free navigation of their great river was a high price for them to pay. What they particularly feared was that if the mediation went on and the powers of Europe united in ending the war, England would claim that as she was in actual possession of two southern provinces she was entitled to keep them and could be asked to surrender to independence only the northern states where she had not obtained a foothold. This was so entirely consistent with the principles of international law that the European powers could hardly reject it; and the obvious course for the patriots to pursue was to break by some means the British hold in the South before the mediation movement

## MEDIATION OF RUSSIA

reached a point where England could insist on her claim of possession.

In the following summer the mediation movement came to naught, because the Congress and France continued to insist on independence without compromise and this England would not accept. But it is important to remember that from the autumn of 1780 until the summer of 1781, this mediation movement hung over the patriot cause like a cloud and additional danger, which had considerable influence on policy and was a most powerful incentive to General Greene in his campaigns against the British in the South.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Madison Papers, vol. i, pp. 64, 74, and appendix No. 4; Wharton, "Diplomatic Correspondence of the Revolution," vol. iv, pp. 78, 257, 440-449, 455, 456, 477, 480, 502-505, 509, 514, 560, 561, 571-577, 589-590, 610, 612, 619-621, 628, 684, 695, 699, 705, 711-715, 720-722, 773, 776, 859-867; John Jay, Correspondence, vol. ii, p. 206.

## LXXXVII.

### CORNWALLIS BEGINS TO BREAK UP CLINTON'S POLICY

THE depressed state of the patriot cause continued through the autumn of 1780 and the spring and part of the summer of 1781. But during all that time a change, unknown to the patriots, was taking place in Clinton's policy. The change was most favorable to the patriots, but its results were not immediately apparent.

The defeat of Gates, his abandonment of Charlotte and his retreat northward to Hillsboro had left the southern part of North Carolina wide open to invasion, and it seemed to Cornwallis that it should be the next jewel to be added to the British crown. But when he thus cast his eyes northward he was verging upon disobedience of orders. Clinton, the commander-in-chief, had specially instructed him to make the security of South Carolina his primary object and to allow nothing to interfere with that purpose; and Cornwallis had accepted these instructions and agreed to carry them out. Clinton's plan of warfare, as we have already seen, was to hold fast to what was already gained and not be in haste to add more conquests unless a particularly favorable and sure opportunity should occur. The next opportunity of this sort, he thought, would be in the little state of Delaware which was strongly loyalist; and he expected to occupy it with troops in the following spring or summer. But he was fully persuaded that even without Delaware, and holding firmly only Georgia, South Carolina and the City of New York, he could in time wear down the patriot party and save for England a large part, if not all, of the rebellious colonies. He could win in the end, he said, by simply holding what he had and folding his arms.

He, however, would of course be glad to conquer North

## CONTEMPT FOR CLINTON

Carolina, if an opportunity was presented, and he told Cornwallis that it might perhaps be possible to conquer it with the assistance of its loyalists. He also hoped to make an attack on Virginia, provided there was no danger from a French fleet occupying Chesapeake Bay. But the holding of South Carolina was the principal object, and North Carolina and Virginia secondary. No aggressive action must be taken which was inconsistent with the security of South Carolina. As for Virginia, nothing could be accomplished there, unless there was a superior British fleet in possession of Chesapeake Bay; for a British army of occupation in that state would starve to death or be cut off unless it had full communication with the sea.<sup>1</sup>

Cornwallis, on the other hand, had been acquiring a great contempt for this conservative and defensive policy; and he called it "mere tobacco stealing," referring no doubt to the system of raiding which had accompanied it in the beginning. It was entirely too slow for him. He believed that conquest should be actively extended and the war made more aggressive; and his plan was to take both North Carolina and Virginia. So long as the patriots were unsubdued in North Carolina, they would, he believed, endanger the posts in South Carolina. Unless we take North Carolina, he said, "we must give up both South Carolina and Georgia and retire within the walls of Charleston."

North Carolina was the most difficult of the southern states to conquer because its vast distances and widely scattered population could not be controlled from the sea. England was entirely dependent on the sea as her base; and the Revolution was essentially a naval war. North Carolina had only one port, Wilmington, which gave no military access to the rest of the state and did not affect the state's commerce or supplies. The state, as Harry Lee said, could be assailed only "through Vir-

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<sup>1</sup> B. F. Stevens, "Clinton-Cornwallis Controversy," vol. i, pp. 43 note, 213, 214, 215.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

ginia or South Carolina, through each of which her foreign commerce passes."<sup>2</sup>

Cornwallis regarded the conquest of North Carolina as a mere incident to the taking of Virginia, which was, he said, the home of patriotism in the South and the key to the situation. He was impatient of Clinton's studious care in holding fast to South Carolina and Georgia; for if Virginia were taken, the rest of the South, Cornwallis said, "would fall without much resistance and be retained without much difficulty."<sup>3</sup>

In this he was totally mistaken, and his idea of the importance of Virginia was contrary to the views of both Washington and Clinton and the best military opinion of the time. Virginia, by her strong patriotism and eminent men, was, it is true, of much moral importance to the patriot cause. But it was Charleston, and not Virginia, that was the military key to the South; and Charleston, as Washington and Rochambeau explained to De Grasse, was of vast importance to the British.

"It is the centre of their power in the south. By holding it they preserve a dangerous influence throughout the whole State, as it is the only port, and the only place from whence the people can procure those articles of foreign produce, which are essential to their support;" and it in great measure serves to cover and keep in subjection the State of Georgia. From thence the enemy can also establish small posts in North Carolina; and if they maintain a post in Chesapeake, they keep up the appearance of possessing 400 miles upon the coast, and of consequence have a pretext for setting up claims, which may be very detrimental to the interests of America in European Councils." (*Writings of Washington*, Ford edition, vol. 9, p. 339.)

We are therefore at a very critical point, a turning point in the war and in Clinton's plans, because the general entrusted to carry out those plans despises them. This might not have been so serious in itself; for it is by no means an unheard of thing for a subordinate to despise the plans of his superior. But Lord

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<sup>2</sup> In those times the people of North Carolina sold their crops and bought their supplies in Charleston. Graham, "The Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence," p. 27.

<sup>3</sup> B. F. Stevens, "Clinton-Cornwallis Controversy," vol. i, pp. 70, 66, 225, 237, 238, 259, 268; Lee, *Memoirs*, vol. i, pp. 232, 233.



## GENIUS OF CORNWALLIS

Cornwallis was influential and powerful, both as a politician and as a member of the British aristocracy, and he was also in the very unusual position of being able to communicate directly with the home government and discuss with them the whole military situation in America, without any previous consultation with Clinton.

This extraordinary arrangement which produced such momentous results in our history was due in some degree to a mistake made by Clinton, with very good intentions and in perfect good faith. For the sake of saving time in the transmission of despatches, which in the ordinary course would be sent to New York and thence to the Ministry in England, Clinton gave Cornwallis permission to send reports directly to the Ministry in addition to sending reports to New York. Cornwallis took full advantage of this permission to ingratiate himself with the Ministry. He even went beyond the permission and took other means; for on two occasions he sent a confidential aide-de-camp across the water to represent his plans and interests and press them directly upon the home government.

That the Ministry allowed the subordinate to do this and become independent of his commander-in-chief was a tribute to the strong influence of Cornwallis as a nobleman and a politician, and helps to explain why he rose to such high office and important commands after the Revolution, in spite of his surrender at Yorktown. It also shows the loose and irregular fashion in which the British Government was administered under universal bribery and corruption by the men of fashion, who composed the ruling class. These influences and the exaggerated impression of his victory over Gates at Camden, put Cornwallis in a position to undermine his superior officer.

The Ministry and the King had for some time, it is said, entertained the same opinion as Cornwallis as to the importance of Virginia and they were pleased to find that his Lordship agreed with them. Since his victory over Gates at Camden they were inclined to think that he might be the great military genius who would save America. A few years before some of the patriot party had believed Gates superior to Washington

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

because Gates had beaten Burgoyne at Saratoga, and so now the Ministry believed that Cornwallis was superior to Clinton because Cornwallis had defeated Gates at Camden.<sup>4</sup>

The defeat of Gates at Camden was really a patriot victory in disguise; for it gave Cornwallis an overweening confidence in himself as the general of the most remarkable victory of the war and led the Ministry to substitute his absurd plans for the more soldierlike and scientific policy of Clinton. Very soon the Ministry directed Cornwallis to disregard the plan of his superior officer, and they directed Clinton to support the plan of his subordinate.

So disgusted was Clinton with this withdrawal of confidence from him, that he said he would have resigned and turned over his command to Cornwallis if he had been near enough to him; and he suspected that Cornwallis surmised this and was anxious to reach Virginia in the hope of being near enough to the commander-in-chief to receive his resignation.<sup>5</sup>

The gossip of the time pointed to the old quarrel between Clinton and one of the ministers, Lord George Germain. Clinton, it will be remembered, went to England in the early part of the war intending to fight a duel with Germain if he would not make amends for garbled extracts of one of Clinton's letters, which he had published. Germain, to avoid the duel, made ample amends and secured Clinton's admission to the Order of the Bath. When, therefore, said the gossips, Cornwallis began to argue to the Ministry against Clinton and his plans, Germain lent a willing ear and readily consented to encourage the subordinate at the expense of the superior.

In the early summer of 1780, after Cornwallis had taken command in South Carolina, he began to receive repeated messages from the North Carolina loyalists expressing their impa-

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<sup>4</sup> B. F. Stevens, "Clinton-Cornwallis Controversy," vol. i, pp. 42, 43 note, 144, 355; vol. ii, pp. 16 and notes, 134 notes.

<sup>5</sup> In the summer of 1779 Clinton had written to the Ministry a letter of rather fulsome eulogy of Cornwallis, and asked leave to resign in his lordship's favor, but permission was refused. Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. viii, pp. 45, 46 notes.

## NO RISING OF LOYALISTS

tience to rise and join the King's standard. Several premature risings occurred which seemed to indicate large numbers. A Colonel Bryan collected about eight hundred loyalists at the forks of the Yadkin and came down into South Carolina. There was also another considerable rising in Tryon County, which was, however, routed and scattered by the patriots.

Cornwallis replied to all the loyalist overtures by restraining their ardor for the present, because there were not enough supplies either at Camden or in North Carolina to support the large loyalist army that seemed to be promised. He urged them to remain quiet for the present until the crops of that year were harvested and then he would join them.

He was greatly surprised, however, that when Gates was marching to attack Camden these devoted loyalists sent no word of his movements. When Gates was defeated on the 16th of August, it seemed to be the nick of time for the rising of the loyalists and Cornwallis sent word to them to stand forth and prevent the reunion of the scattered patriot forces. So confident was he that they would now show themselves in great numbers that he believed that he could carry out his plans for conquering Virginia, as well as North Carolina, and he sent a message to New York urging Clinton to send as large a force as he could spare to Virginia. With such a force in Virginia and himself at the head of a vast loyalist horde sweeping up to cooperate with it from North Carolina, his Lordship foresaw that Virginia, the pivotal southern state, was doomed, and that the whole country south of Pennsylvania would acknowledge the mild and beneficent sway of George III.<sup>o</sup>

But again he was disappointed. The loyalists did little or nothing against Gates's scattered army, and in the language of one of Cornwallis's officers not a single loyalist attempted to improve the favorable moment or obey that summons for which they had before been so impatient. Thinking that the presence of his army in North Carolina would encourage them,

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<sup>o</sup> B. F. Stevens, "Clinton-Cornwallis Controversy," vol. i, pp. 277, 278, 272, 224, 233, 239, 242, 243, 245, 261, 264, 269.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

Cornwallis now sent messengers to tell them that he was coming, and, about a month after the defeat of Gates, he marched into the state and on the 26th of September, 1780, occupied Charlotte. It was the worst place he could have selected for his purpose, because the region round it, Rowan and Mecklenburg counties, was the most strongly patriot part of North Carolina. It would have been better and more encouraging to the loyalists to have gone to Cross Creek, now Fayetteville, or some other point where loyalism was almost universal.<sup>7</sup>

He was now out of South Carolina, his first and most important care, and may be said to have been testing his new plans to see if he really could invade Virginia and take North Carolina on the way. But during his whole stay at Charlotte there was none of the uprising of loyalists that was expected, and in making this North Carolina experiment he had committed a serious blunder in allowing Major Ferguson to invade North Carolina farther to the westward, and occupy an isolated position with a comparatively small force.

This was that same Ferguson, said to have invented a breech loading rifle and much interested in that sort of weapon, who as a captain had conducted the raid and prisoner killing expedition at Egg Harbor in New Jersey. Since the taking of Charleston, he, and a Colonel Hanger, had been given large duties of civil and military organization in the region round Ninety-Six, where the inhabitants were mostly loyalists. He was to receive submission, administer oaths of allegiance, inspect and report on the quantity of grain and number of cattle, perform the marriage ceremony and most important of all recruit and drill a good body of loyalist militia.

He was most diligent and successful in all these duties, organizing seven battalions of loyalist militia, consisting of about 4000 men who could furnish 1500 under arms at short notice. He would sit for hours with people of all classes to discuss public affairs with that air of sympathy and condescen-

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<sup>7</sup> Tarleton, "Narrative," pp. 160, 168.

## THE OVER-MOUNTAIN MEN

sion which has so often been used by his nation to show the superiority of subjection over the crudeness, uncertainties and hazards of independence.<sup>8</sup>

As early as July, 1780, he had begun moving northward from Ninety-Six, with some of his recruited loyalists, for the purpose of pacifying the country and coming in contact with more of its people. He wanted to go forward and take them all by the hand to show the good intentions of government; and he was greatly encouraged by the uprisings of loyalists under Bryan and the Moores which occurred about this time. But as he evidently intended to enter western North Carolina, the patriots of that state organized themselves to oppose him. They had for their partisan leader Colonel Charles McDowell; and he immediately sent for the assistance of the over-mountain men, who had recently settled in what is now eastern Tennessee, on the other side of those North Carolina mountains which in our time have been such a favorite resort of tourists and health seekers.<sup>9</sup>

The over-mountain Scotch-Irish settlers, who, as we have already seen, had helped to check the Cherokees from going to the assistance of the British, would prove to be a valuable force if they could see their own interest in preventing the near approach of Ferguson to their homes. Their Deckard rifles, their experience in Indian fighting and their combination of the qualities of hunter, farmer and horseman, were sorely needed by the North Carolina patriots, who were comparatively few and scattered, and much crippled in their organization by the multitudes of loyalists in all their communities.

Strong appeals were made to the over-mountain leaders, Shelby, Sevier and Robertson; and two of them, Shelby and Robertson with several hundred riflemen, soon joined McDowell, who thus had about 1000 men to oppose Ferguson's 1500 loyalist militia.

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<sup>8</sup> Draper, "King's Mountain and Its Heroes," pp. 68, 69, 72, 73, 142;  
"Life of Colonel Hanger," p. 176.

<sup>9</sup> Draper, "King's Mountain and Its Heroes," p. 84.



## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

McDowell was considered a rather inactive partisan leader; but two of his subordinates, Shelby and Clarke, made expeditions close to Ferguson's lines. In two minor engagements, Cedar Springs and Wofford's Iron Works, they gained no advantage; but in two other expeditions they were eminently successful.

One of these expeditions of 600 men under Shelby went to Thickety Fort, a loyalist post in South Carolina, and compelled its surrender on the 13th of July without firing a shot. In August Shelby and Clarke made an attempt on the loyalists at Musgrove's Mill on the Enoree in the rear of Ferguson's main force. Failing to surprise their enemy and learning that he was not only aware of their presence but had been reinforced, they protected themselves by a breastwork of logs and brush where the loyalists attacked them and suffered a severe repulse from the sharp-shooting of the riflemen. There has been much difference of opinion as to the losses; but it is probable that the loyalists had sixty-three killed, ninety wounded and seventy made prisoners, while the Americans had only four killed and eight wounded.

So elated were Shelby and Clarke with this success in Ferguson's rear, that they were consulting about making a dash at Ninety-Six, only twenty-five miles distant, when a messenger from McDowell brought them word of Gates's overwhelming defeat by Cornwallis at Camden two days before, on the 16th of August.

McDowell's message also advised an immediate return or they would be cut off. He himself was already retreating northward to Gilbert Town on the eastern edge of the mountains; and soon after when Shelby and Clarke had started for the same place they found themselves pursued by Ferguson, who was only half an hour behind them when he abandoned the pursuit.

Shelby and Clarke reached North Carolina with their men completely exhausted, with eyes and faces swollen by their race for life through the heat; and they were sick from living on

## FERGUSON ADVANCES

nothing but green corn and peaches which they snatched from the trees and corn stalks as they rode along.<sup>10</sup>

Shelby, McDowell and all the other leaders now decided to raise a large force from both sides of the mountains to check Ferguson. But for the present there was a general scattering and returning home of both McDowell's force and the overmountain men, while messages were sent in every direction to the trees and cornstalks as they rode along.<sup>10</sup>

Ferguson took advantage of the dispersion to advance into North Carolina, marching by night to avoid the heat; and his loyalist detachments spread out far, overawing patriot families, seizing prominent men, administering the oath of allegiance to those who submitted and punishing the unyielding by seizure or destruction of their property, while many of the patriot men became "out liers" in the woods, not daring to visit their homes except with the greatest caution and secrecy.

In this way Ferguson reached Gilbert Town, described in the diary of Allaire, one of his lieutenants, as consisting of a dwelling house, a barn and a blacksmith shop. It was near the modern Rutherfordton on the edge of the western mountains, not very far eastward of the modern Asheville.

This isolated move into western North Carolina may have been encouraged if not suggested by Cornwallis's victory over Gates at Camden; for soon after that victory Ferguson seems to have visited Cornwallis, and on his return to his loyalist militia they moved rapidly northward.<sup>11</sup>

Considerable numbers of the inhabitants of the Gilbert Town region are said to have come in, submitted and taken the British oath of allegiance. Five hundred of them, Allaire says, arrived during one day. Many of them were patriots who afterwards explained their submission as an act of necessity to protect their families and property. In fact McDowell had recommended this course as a device to save the patriot stock of cattle from being seized by the British. The prominent patriots came

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<sup>10</sup> Draper, "King's Mountain and Its Heroes," pp. 87, 88, 89, 103-118, 120, 121, 122 and note, 502, 503.

<sup>11</sup> Draper, *id.*, pp. 505, 506.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

to an understanding among themselves. Some hid their cattle in the deep valleys of the mountains and remained avowed patriots, while others who could not do this went to Ferguson and saved their stock by taking his oath. A prominent descendant of one of these patriots who took the oath fought a duel in modern times, and killed his antagonist, who had charged him with having a loyalist for a father.<sup>12</sup>

It was now the beginning of September, and Cornwallis in writing to Clinton of this isolated movement by Ferguson with a small force into western North Carolina admitted its danger. "Ferguson," he says, "is to move into Tryon County with some militia, whom he says he is sure he can depend upon for doing their duty; but I am sorry to say that his own experience, as well as that of every other officer, is totally against him."<sup>13</sup>

One would suppose that holding such a very positive opinion it would have been the duty of Cornwallis to forbid this isolated movement by Ferguson or to order his return. The fighting qualities of the North Carolina and over-mountain riflemen and the inefficiency of Ferguson's loyalist militia had already been tested at Thickety Fort and Musgrove's Mill. But Cornwallis, with his eyes open to the danger, seems to have permitted Ferguson to risk himself almost in the heart of the country of the famous riflemen. Stedman explains that the general plan of Cornwallis was to march his main army into the most patriotic part of the state near Charlotte and Salisbury, having on his right the loyalist section near Cross Creek and on his left another strongly loyalist section in Tryon County. If he could with his main army reduce to obedience the patriotic section, communication could be opened between the loyalist sections on the right and left, and such powerful assistance derived from their coöperation that the speedy reduction of the whole province could be reasonably expected.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Draper, "King's Mountain and Its Heroes," pp. 147, 149, 150, 508.

<sup>13</sup> Ross, "Correspondence of Cornwallis," vol. i, pp. 58, 59.

<sup>14</sup> Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iii, pp. 450-461, B. F. Stevens, "Clinton-Cornwallis Controversy," vol. i, p. 267; Draper,

## TRADITIONS OF FERGUSON

Ferguson's detachment penetrated westward into the mountains as far as Old Fort on the western side of the present McDowell County. He was led to venture so far, it was said, in the hope of cutting off the retreat of a certain Colonel Clark, a native of Georgia who in September had collected a partisan force of about 500 patriots and made a daring raid into Georgia in the hope of taking Augusta, garrisoned by loyalists under a rather capable loyalist officer Colonel Brown. It was a reckless, ill-advised expedition, failed utterly in its attack on Augusta and was driven off with heavy loss. The unarmed inhabitants who had favored or assisted it were treated with great severity by the British and thirty of them hung.<sup>15</sup>

Ferguson believed that everything was favoring the British and he boldly announced the rebellion ended and the country both conquered and pacified. He visited patriot families in person, treating them with the most kindly consideration and advising them to recall their husbands or sons who were "out liers."

Many tales and traditions of his doings and character were preserved among the scattered families of the region. One of his officers was taken with the dreaded smallpox and to prevent contagion was left in a deserted house with his favorite horse, where both perished in silence and solitude; for neither patriot nor loyalist would go near them.

One of the most curious traditions was of one of his officers, Major Dunlap, a loyalist much hated by the patriots for his cruelty and methods of thoroughness. Badly wounded, he was left with a loyalist family, where he was killed, it is said, on his bed by a young patriot, Captain Gillespie, who came all the way from South Carolina to avenge himself for his sweetheart whom Dunlap had seized and kept under restraint till she died. Other traditions describe his violent death in other ways; the

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"King's Mountain and Its Heroes," pp. 200, 508, 509; Lee, *Memoirs*, vol. i, p. 205; Stedman, "American War," vol. ii, p. 219; Johnson, "Life of Greene," pp. 289, 290, 311 note.

<sup>15</sup> Diaper, *id.*, pp. 118, 119, 140, 142, 144, 147, 150; Stedman, "American War," vol. ii, p. 215.

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blood stain on the floor was pointed out, and since the house was torn down the blood stained plank has been preserved. But Major Dunlap afterwards fought in the British army at the close of the Revolution, was taken prisoner and murdered by his guards for his notorious severities. The tradition of his death in North Carolina was probably a device of the mountain loyalists to ensure his safe return to the British army after Ferguson had departed.

It was no doubt a delightful and adventurous outing for Ferguson in that picturesque mountain region with its charming climate, which is now sought by both northern and southern tourists at all seasons of the year. Englishmen are always fascinated by these excursions into wild regions, especially if the region belongs to another people; and possibly the fascination in this instance blinded them to the military situation.

Ferguson was inclined to be extremely liberal and pardon every one, and it was noticed that he signed the paroles and protections with his left hand; for his right arm had been shattered at Brandywine. Slender, of only medium height and with a rather grave face and of no commanding presence, he nevertheless appears to have been capable of winning considerable popularity. He was no doubt zealous and capable as a subordinate within a narrow sphere. But his grasp of general conditions could not have been very comprehensive or he never would have supposed that his little party of less than a thousand loyalists could safely hold western North Carolina. Filled with an unusual measure of over confidence he was so sure of his work of subjugation that he actually declined the services of a freshly recruited troop of loyalist cavalry.



## LXXXVIII.

### THE BATTLE OF KING'S MOUNTAIN

FERGUSON believed that his plans of easy subjugation could be extended across the mountains into Tennessee, and he paroled one of his prisoners, Samuel Phillips, and sent him with a message to Shelby, Sevier and the other leaders, that "if they did not desist from their opposition to the British arms, he would march his army over the mountains, hang their leaders and lay their country waste with fire and sword."

The over-mountain men had fully intended to move eastward again and this message reminded them of their resolve, and hastened their preparations. Messages were sent northward into Southwestern Virginia for the frontiersmen under Colonel William Campbell, who had recently been engaged in preventing the loyalists from capturing the Chiswell lead mines of that region from which large quantities of lead were procured for all the patriot armies. To buy equipment and supplies all the public money in the over-mountain treasury was taken; and Shelby and Sevier pledged themselves to refund it or obtain an act of the North Carolina legislature approving this use of it.<sup>1</sup>

The over-mountain and Virginia forces were all united on the 25th of September at Sycamore Flats, on the Watauga River in East Tennessee, near the present village of Elizabethtown, where the McDowell men had for some time been encamped. After a stirring appeal by their Presbyterian minister from the text "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon," they all started eastward by the nearest pass, just north of Roan Mountain, and followed a stream called Doe River, which at this point breaks through the range.

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<sup>1</sup>Draper, "King's Mountain and Its Heroes," pp. 151-153, 160, 528, 540, 541, 547, 562-564.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

Besides his blanket and rifle each man carried on his horse a bag of parched corn mixed with maple syrup. They tried at first to have cattle driven in their rear; but abandoned them to prevent delay; so that the parched corn and the game they shot was their sole supply of food. Each man was acting largely for himself and set out in quest of Ferguson as though he were a personal enemy or a fat bear.<sup>2</sup>

Less than three days after they started Ferguson and his loyalist officers heard of their coming from two deserters. It was a rude awakening from his dream of conquest; and was even worse than he supposed, for a North Carolina force under two partisan leaders, Cleveland and Winston, was marching towards him, and another patriot partisan corps from South Carolina, under Williams, Hill and Lacey, was also on its way; and yet he had felt so secure that he had given leave to some of his loyalist troops to visit their families.

He now hurriedly sent out messengers calling on all loyalists to rally to the Royal Standard; and possibly he hoped for one of those great uprisings of loyalism which had been so long expected. He abandoned his post at Gilbert Town and instead of going directly eastward to Cornwallis at Charlotte, which was about seventy miles away, he marched southward towards Ninety-Six for the purpose it seems of misleading the over-mountain men, and also in the hope of intercepting the force of the patriot partisan Clark, who was coming up from his attempt on Augusta in Georgia.

Three days later, hearing that the Back Water men,<sup>3</sup> as he called them, were following him, Ferguson sent word of his danger to Cornwallis and another message to Ninety-Six calling for reinforcements. He issued a proclamation calling on the

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<sup>2</sup> Diaper, "King's Mountain and Its Heroes," pp. 174, 175, 535, 563, 564.

<sup>3</sup> The over-mountain people were called Back Water men, apparently, because they lived beyond the sources of the eastern rivers, and on waters which flowed into the Mississippi. They were also called by Cornwallis Back Mountain men. In modern books they have sometimes been spoken of as mountaineers, and many have assumed that they were very much the same curious people that we have known of in our own time in the

## KING'S MOUNTAIN

loyalists to rise and withstand "the inundation of barbarians who by their shocking cruelties and irregularities give the best proof of their cowardice;" and then after loitering for several days in the hope of receiving recruits or intercepting Clark, he turned eastward along the border of South Carolina to seek safety with Cornwallis at Charlotte, assuming that his pursuers would suppose that he had continued southward to Ninety Six. He sent another message to Cornwallis saying that he was coming by the road which led north of King's Mountain and suggesting that reinforcements be sent to meet him.

King's Mountain is a range some sixteen miles long, extending in a northeastwardly and southwestwardly direction across the border of the two Carolinas. While passing along the part of the range in South Carolina, Ferguson's attention was attracted by a low spur of only about sixty feet elevation, narrow and about six hundred yards long, and here he decided to stop, wait for reinforcements and fight the pursuing riflemen under Shelby, Campbell and Sevier.

Meantime the Tennessee and Virginia riflemen had been joined by Colonel Benjamin Cleveland's North Carolinians from the Upper Yadkin Valley. The combined forces elected as commander the leader of the Virginia contingent, Colonel William Campbell, who was a typical raw-boned Scotch Irishman of Western Virginia, of good education, like so many of the Presbyterian Scotch Irish, and fond of military life and frontier politics. Cleveland who led the Yadkin Valley troops had been a hunter of many adventures, a rollicking horse racing frontiersman, strongly attracted like so many daring spirits by the abundance of game and the invigorating fresh-

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Tennessee and Carolina Mountains, and about whom some very striking stories and novels have been written. But very few people lived in the mountains at the time of the Revolution, and the Back Water men were merely North Carolinians, mostly of Scotch-Irish stock, who had crossed the mountains to enjoy the level and fertile lands of Tennessee, in the same way that the Virginians who followed Boone, crossed the mountains into Kentucky.

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ness of the North Carolina wilderness. The elk then roamed east of the mountains and the rattlesnakes could be found in colonies. One day, in pursuing a wounded elk Cleveland suddenly found himself in the midst of one of these hissing colonies from which he escaped by plunging into the river.

According to Shelby's enumeration the troops now assembled were :<sup>1</sup>

Over-mountain men under Shelby...	240
Over-mountain men under Sevier.	240
Virginians under Campbell ...	400
North Carolinians under McDowell .....	160
North Carolinians under Cleveland.....	350
	1390

The over-mountain men, it will be observed, were considerably less than half and this statement is necessary because there is a general impression that the expedition was principally made up of the romantic hunters from the Tennessee. A week or so later they were joined by several hundred South Carolinians, so that the proportion of over-mountain men became still smaller. The little army would be properly described as composed of patriot riflemen of the farmer, hunter and Indian fighting class from the frontiers of the two Carolinas and Virginia.

As they followed Ferguson towards Ninety-Six, they were completely deceived by his ruse, missed the turn he had made eastward, and kept on towards Ninety-Six, while he was moving eastward and waiting for them at King's Mountain. So rapidly did they pursue him towards Ninety-Six, that they exhausted many of their horses. Not a few of the men were obliged to tramp on foot and all were discouraged and disgusted. Ferguson had been assisted in his ruse by some of the South Carolina patriots under Williams, who wanted Campbell's army to keep on southward, abandon their enterprise against Ferguson and attack Ninety-Six so as to help the patriots in that region protect their property from the loyalists.

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<sup>1</sup> Draper, "King's Mountain and Its Heroes," p. 563.

## RIFLEMEN AT THE MOUNTAIN

But Ferguson's trick was finally discovered, and on the evening of the 5th of October, 700 of the best mounted men were selected and sent on the true course to the eastward. The next day they reached a place called the Cowpens where a prosperous loyalist, named Saunders, collected his cattle. Here they were found by some South Carolina patriot bands under Hill and Williams. Several large bodies of armed loyalists were nearby; but they seem to have been slow and inactive.

Another selection of men was now made and on the night of the 6th of October, 910 mounted riflemen started in the rain to attack Ferguson in the morning. But by noon the next day they had not found him and horses and men were so exhausted that some of the leaders wanted to halt. Soon they began to capture scouts and a messenger from Ferguson. From one of these a description of Ferguson's dress was obtained, a check shirt over his uniform, and the riflemen were told to remember it. The messenger was carrying a dispatch to Cornwallis expressing great anxiety and earnestly calling for assistance.

At three in the afternoon of this 7th day of October they were at the base of the spur on the top of which Ferguson was encamped in English fashion, with no intrenchments or breast-works. As they rode along the leaders had agreed on the plan of attack and communicated it to the men, who were to surround the spur and charge up in Indian fashion from tree to tree. As soon as they arrived near the base of the spur the riflemen all dismounted and, leaving their coats and blankets strapped to the saddles, tied their horses in the woods and with scarcely a moment's delay started on foot up the three easy sides of the spur.

Ferguson had about one hundred loyalists from New Jersey, New York and Connecticut, known as his rangers, picked from permanent loyalist regiments, such as the King's American Regiment and the Queen's Rangers. These picked troops were often spoken of at the time as regulars, although provincials was a more proper term for describing such loyalists in the British service. The rest of Ferguson's men were southern loyalist militia, or loyalist volunteers as they have sometimes



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been called; and the whole force numbered about 900 on the spur and possibly 200 more foraging at some distance.<sup>5</sup>

Strange to say, although Ferguson professed to be a marksman and had spent a large part of his life in trying to introduce the rifle into the British service, his men, many of whom on this occasion had rifles, were not encouraged to shoot. They were instructed to rely principally upon the bayonet. Those without regular bayonets had long knives to fit into the muzzles of their guns; so that Ferguson might as well have surrendered at once, for his battle was lost before it was begun.

He had not been keeping a very good lookout for such a heavily timbered country, where a large body of men might approach very close before being seen. The riflemen had rushed on so rapidly during the day capturing his scouts that it seems that they had formed and were within a quarter of a mile of him before he knew it. They came on shouting and yelling after their manner. Some of them were instructed by their officers to "shout like hell and fight like devils." Some of them used the Indian warwhoop and very likely a great deal of the shouting was similar to what was afterwards known as the "rebel yell" or the "Tennessee yell" in the Civil War of 1861.

Ferguson had considered his position a good one, with one end of the spur precipitous and unassailable and the other end and sides sloping more gradually; and General Bernard, one of Napoleon's engineers, who visited King's Mountain, seems to have considered the position a correct one from a European point of view. But if we take into account that the slopes were covered with trees and boulders, the ideal ground for the advance of American riflemen, each man acting individually and moving from tree to tree like an Indian, we must conclude, and General Bernard in effect admitted, that Ferguson's position was not well chosen.

He might have no doubt made it good or better by putting his men behind breastworks, safe from the riflemen and ready

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<sup>5</sup> Draper, "King's Mountain and Its Heroes," pp. 237, 238.

## FERGUSON'S WEAK POSITION

to pour a volley into them in Bunker Hill fashion, when they came up close. It would also, it seems, have been better if he had kept his men on the summit and not allowed them to charge down the sides. Both Shelby and Cleveland describe the sides as steep and they considered themselves at great disadvantage in charging upwards. It was "almost equal," said Shelby, "to storming a battery."

But instead of using all these advantages of his position Ferguson relied upon charging down hill upon his enemy, who would shrewdly retire to avoid the shock of the charge and then come on again, shooting down the tired loyalists, who had ventured down so far and had to run up hill to escape. The summit of the spur was bare of trees and as the riflemen neared it they could stand behind trees on the slopes and have easy marks on the bare summit. As Lee afterwards remarked, Ferguson's position was more "assailable by the rifle than defensible with the bayonet."<sup>a</sup>

It was poor generalship on Ferguson's part to disdain intrenchments and breastworks. Patriots would have intrenched themselves so strongly that nothing but a siege and starvation would have dislodged them. The only point where Ferguson achieved the slightest success was where some of his men imitated the patriot tactics and got among a clump of rocks, defending themselves for a considerable time.

"Ben Hollingsworth and I," said one of the riflemen, "took up the side of the mountain, and fought our way from tree to tree, up to the summit. I recollect I stood behind one tree and fired until the bark was nearly all knocked off, and my eyes pretty well filled with it. One fellow shaved me pretty close, for his bullet took a piece out of my gun stock." (Draper, "King's Mountain and Its Heroes," p. 270.)

It is rather strange that we find so little in Revolutionary records of marksmanship among loyalists, who living in America would naturally, we might suppose, have the same practice with firearms as the patriots. But our knowledge of loyalists comes

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<sup>a</sup> Draper, "King's Mountain and Its Heroes," pp. 272, 524, 526, 543.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

largely from the writings of patriots, who were unwilling, as a rule, to admit that their bitter enemies had any qualities, save contemptible ones. At King's Mountain, however, we are perhaps given a glimpse of the truth; for Draper has collected some instances of what loyalists could do with a rifle when given a chance. Those of them who got behind trees or rocks, instead of charging, picked off patriots with deadly skill. In several instances a patriot and a loyalist were both killed simultaneously by each other's fire; and in one instance two brothers killed each other in this way. But all through the Revolution there seems to have been something in the British army system, or in the methods of its officers, which prevented the creation of marksmen or prevented their use when created.<sup>7</sup>

The stupidity of the repeated charges of the loyalists was redeemed only by its heroism. They kept it up for a long time, under the direct encouragement of Ferguson, who kept sounding his silver battle-whistle. But of what avail was such valor against the method of the riflemen to yield to every charge; to rely entirely upon marksmanship; and make every shot a careful study with a weapon used and spoken to as though it were a favorite horse?

It was not unlike Braddock's defeat in the French and Indian War, when the British regulars attempted to charge upon the Indians concealed behind logs and rocks. Every ridiculous charge of the loyalists was merely a bringing down of fresh targets for the patriots. The loyalists were ordered to reserve their fire until the end of their charge; but at that point their enemy was under cover and they themselves were unsteady for want of breath. Their shots merely cut the bark from trees or went over the heads of the riflemen. They would then fall back up hill, reloading by a method Ferguson had taught them, but exposed like so many sheep to the fire of the patriots.

White flags were soon raised, but Ferguson cut them down with his sword, and then with some friends attempted to escape

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<sup>7</sup> Draper, "King's Mountain and Its Heroes," p. 314.

## CONFUSION ON THE SUMMIT

on horseback through the patriot lines. Every one knew him; for the description had been passed round—he wears a check shirt over his uniform, he uses the sword in his left hand, for his right was crippled at Brandywine. A rifleman, Robert Young, with his pet weapon "Sweet Lips," fired at Ferguson and confidently claimed the honor of his death. But others had fired at him; for seven bullets were found in his body.

White flags were now displayed on guns and ramrods and mounted men waved handkerchiefs. Several of them were shot down by loyalist officers. Two men with handkerchiefs were shot in succession from the same horse and the third succeeded in being noticed and received by Shelby. The riflemen had been fighting in such a scattered and individual way that as they came crowding up to the summit they did not see or understand the flags, or angrily disregarded them, shouting: "Give them Tarleton's quarters." Young Sevier, believing that his father had been killed, kept loading and firing with tears streaming down his cheeks until his father arrived and stopped him. Shelby was riding up and down screaming to the loyalists: "Damn you, if you want quarters throw down your arms."

Other leaders exerted themselves to restore order. Campbell shouted: "Officers rank by yourselves; prisoners take off your hats and sit down." The surrendering loyalists were now huddled in a mass along the summit of the spur and the patriots were gradually forming a guard round them, when some shots were fired, either by the prisoners, or by a loyalist foraging party just returning, and one of these shots mortally wounded Colonel Williams of the riflemen.

Campbell immediately ordered the riflemen round him to fire upon the prisoners. "We killed near a hundred of them," said Lieutenant Hughes, "and could hardly be restrained from killing the whole." This might seem at first to be a very exaggerated account by young Hughes, who was not twenty years old and very bitter against the loyalists for killing his father. But there was unquestionably a great number killed, after the surrendering had begun. Colonel Arthur Campbell said that



## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

this largely accounted for the heavy loyalist loss afterwards reported. "They were driven into a huddle," he said, "and received a heavy fire before our troops could be notified of the surrender." The riflemen had no regular military discipline and were more like an intelligent mob than an army. After the death of Ferguson the loyalists were in very much the same condition, and the next officer in command, De Peyster, could not control them sufficiently to make a regular, formal surrender.<sup>8</sup>

It was feared that the prisoners would seize their arms again and renew the fight, until at last the lucky suggestion was made of marching them away from their arms, which had been thrown on the ground. Loyalist officers were surrendering here and there by handing swords to the nearest patriot officer; and Campbell, in his shirt-sleeves and with his collar open, was tramping about with his hands full of swords and a bundle of them under his arm. It was a farmer's and a hunter's way of attending to such business; and a patriot lieutenant, to whom a sword was offered, not sure that he had the right to accept it, invited the officer to sit down on the ground and talk with him.

The battle is supposed to have lasted about an hour; and taken in all its details is a most striking evidence of the military incapacity of both Cornwallis and Ferguson. That Cornwallis, after having admitted in writing that Ferguson had troops which could not be relied upon, should have failed to send him any reinforcements and allowed him to remain with less than a thousand men seventy miles away for nearly a month, seems like very gross carelessness. The plans of Cornwallis depended entirely upon the rising of the loyalists of North Carolina. Ferguson's expedition was essentially a loyalist one for the encouragement of loyalism; and if he were cut off the loyalists would be so discouraged that they would not rise at all. Why should he risk the whole loyalist uprising by exposing a small isolated detachment so far away?

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<sup>8</sup> Draper, "King's Mountain and Its Heroes," pp. 281-286, 529, 566.



## EXCUSES OF CORNWALLIS

"My not sending relief to Ferguson, although he was positively ordered to retire, was entirely owing to Tarleton himself; he pleaded weakness from the remains of a fever, and refused to make the attempt, although I used the most earnest entreaties." (Ross, "Correspondence of Cornwallis," vol. i, p. 59.)

If his army was really in such a state, that he had no one but Tarleton to send and could not compel obedience in Tarleton, his chances for a victorious progress through North Carolina and Virginia were very small. He says that Ferguson "was positively ordered to retire;" but does not say when that order was sent or whether Ferguson received it. If it reached Ferguson early in September he was a very disobedient officer; for he remained all that month at Gilbert Town. A letter to him from Cornwallis dated the 23rd of September was found in his baggage by the riflemen and published; and this letter gives no order about retreating and shows no alarm for his situation; but on the contrary seems to assume that he is safe. He showed no signs of having received any order to retreat and began to retire only when he heard that the over-mountain men and the Virginians were almost upon him.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Tarleton, Narrative, pp. 100-105, 192; Ross, "Correspondence of Cornwallis," vol. i, pp. 59 note, 304; Draper, "King's Mountain and Its Heroes," pp. 364, 370, 377, 548.

The original evidence has been exhaustively collected by Mr. Draper in "King's Mountain and Its Heroes," in which the original letters, Shelby's pamphlet and Allaire's diary printed in full can be found. There is a chapter on the battle in Roosevelt's "Winning of the West." Kirk's account in his "Rear Guard of the Revolution," is largely a glorification of Sevier. Draper is by far the most reliable source of information. See *Magazine of American History*, vol. v, pp. 351, 401, and also the account in Gordon's "American Revolution."

## LXXXIX.

### THE RIFLEMEN HANG NINE OF THEIR PRISONERS

THE riflemen burnt Ferguson's baggage and wagons and buried the dead so hurriedly that the wolves dug them up and shared the feast with the vultures. The riflemen had been very anxious to get away and left by ten o'clock the next morning to avoid Tarleton, who was every moment expected with reinforcements from Cornwallis. It certainly was a good opportunity for a British force to attack these tired troops, heavily laden with the captured arms, 600 prisoners and their own wounded borne on litters, nearly starved to death and travelling at the snail's pace of only 40 miles a week.

The captured muskets and rifles were great spoil. The flints were drawn from them and the 600 prisoners were compelled to carry them. But this was by no means the only misery of the prisoners, for a captured loyalist in the hands of patriots was in a wretched plight. He was lucky if his life was spared; his captors could not restrain their contempt and hatred; and did not consider themselves bound by the rules which regulated their conduct towards a captured regular.

No doubt the prisoners were exasperating. They were constantly escaping or attempting to escape. One of them who hid in a hollow tree was dragged out and hacked to pieces with a sword. One stormy day a hundred of them escaped. Some escaped by dropping down into the water at night, as streams were crossed; and to prevent this they were forbidden to drink in crossing rivers. Several who became exhausted were, it is said, "cut down and trodden to death in the mire." In the evening they were fed like swine with corn on the cob and raw pumpkins thrown to them.

But their conquerors probably fared no better in the way of food. The more serious charges of killing and cruelty are apparently well founded; for there is extant an order issued

## THIRST FOR VENGEANCE

by Campbell on the 11th of October in which he says: "I must request the officers of all ranks in the army to endeavor to restrain the disorderly manner of slaughtering and disturbing the prisoners."<sup>1</sup>

Starving and under little military discipline the riflemen soon broke through all restraints, deserted or started out from camp in bands, helping themselves to anything they wanted, plundering alike both patriot and loyalist families, and leaving the patriot families "in a worse situation than the enemy would have done." Terrible passions were loose in the South; and we now gain a glimpse of them; the same passions of murder and assassination which burst forth in Ireland under Britain's system of reducing patriotism to imperial subjection. Cornwallis had hung, burned and robbed from one end of South Carolina to the other, and left patriot women and children sitting by fires at the road-side without homes or protectors, in order that rebellion and patriotism might become odious. Loyalists were his instruments for these deeds; loyalists spied and told about their neighbors; loyalists took part in raids and executions, and all loyalists approved.

It is not then altogether surprising that patriot riflemen kept shooting into the surrendering mass of loyalism on the bare summit of King's Mountain; and hacked prisoners to pieces; and tortured and starved them on the retreat. Stories have come down to us that they treated Ferguson's dead body with indignity, stripped it naked and threw it out on the battlefield to the vultures.

When the riflemen arrived at Gilbert Town and paused in their retreat with some feeling of safety, the South Carolina officers demanded vengeance on the loyalist prisoners to atone for the devastation and hanging Cornwallis had inflicted on the patriots of their state. The British had hung patriots captured at the Battle of Camden, patriots had been hung and massacred at Augusta, patriots had been recently hung at Ninety-Six, and an officer was present who a few days before

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<sup>1</sup> Draper, "King's Mountain and Its Heroes," pp. 325, 326, 328, 346, 518, 531, 532.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

had seen eleven of them hung there for the sake of extirpating patriotism in the South. Why then should not some loyalists now be hung for the sake of extirpating loyalism? Would not the patriots and their cause become contemptible if they tamely submitted to the methods of Cornwallis? Was not retaliation a duty and absolutely necessary to offset the methods of England and make loyalism seem a dangerous occupation?

A tribunal with judges and a jury was hastily formed, and between 30 and 40 of the loyalist prisoners were found guilty of assisting the British by raiding, sacking and burning patriot homes, and tying patriots to trees to be whipped and abandoned. Twelve of the most prominent were selected for hanging and nine were executed by torch-light under an oak tree near the camp.

Six of the nine were officers; and one of them, Colonel Mills, was an elderly man of character and reputation whose fate aroused much sympathy. They all, Allaire says, died like martyrs and heroes, attesting "with their latest breath their unutterable detestation of the rebels and of their base and infamous proceedings; and as they were being turned off extolled their King and the British Government."<sup>2</sup>

But a patriot, pointing to their dangling bodies, exclaimed to the crowd, "Would to God that every tree in the wilderness bore such fruit as that."

After nine had been executed a younger brother fell on the neck of one of the three remaining, and in the midst of loud weeping and lamentations of farewell managed to cut the cords, and the man darted away through the crowd and escaped into the darkness. The two others were discharged and no punishment was attempted on the remaining twenty odd who had been convicted.

One of the three who had been waiting to be hung, said to Shelby, "You have saved my life and I will tell you a secret. Tarleton will be here in the morning, a woman has brought the news."

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<sup>2</sup> Draper, "King's Mountain and Its Heroes," pp. 340, 516, 518.

## CORNWALLIS PROTESTS

Tarleton, it is true, had started; but was not far away and was soon recalled by Cornwallis. The riflemen, however, thought that the warning was likely to be well founded, and by daylight the next morning they were on the march, leaving their nine victims swinging on the oak, from which they were cut down and buried by the loyalists of the region.

Cornwallis sent to Gates some vigorous protests against this hanging. Such murders, he said, were "shocking to humanity" and "an act of the most savage barbarity." Unless such bloody scenes were stopped he would be compelled "to retaliate on the unfortunate persons in his power." He had, on his side, he said, had no one executed except those who having promised to remain quietly at home, or having joined the loyalist militia, had afterwards gone over to the patriots; and a good instance of this sort of punishment is given in Allaire's diary.<sup>3</sup>

"Colonel Turnbull took two prisoners, who had previously been in his camp, drew ammunition, and then joined the rebels, and were heard to say when firing, 'take back your ammunition again.' They were both hanged as a reward for their treachery." (Draper, "King's Mountain," &c., p. 502; see also p. 505.)

Nearly 40 captured patriots are known to have been hung by the British up to that time; and probably there were not a few others whose names have not been added to any of the lists. By the rules of war an enemy who secures a foothold in a country considers himself entitled to punish with death such treachery among the inhabitants as Cornwallis and Allaire describe. But on the other hand there is no rule of either humanity or war which prohibits retaliation by the troops of the people who are still defending their country. There is no equity in the hands of one side being free and the hands of the other side tied.

In the minds of the patriots the loyalists were Americans who had gone over to the British and assisted them by devastating patriot homes and killing patriot people not in arms. Many loyalists had also served with the patriots; for changing

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<sup>3</sup> Draper, "King's Mountain and Its Heroes," pp. 330-344, 536, 544, 557, 200, 373, 505.



## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

of sides as safety or advantage indicated, was very common; and Washington had recently said that "severe examples should be made of those who were forgiven for former offences and are again in arms against us."<sup>4</sup>

Under these circumstances, when Cornwallis had run up his list of hangings to about 40, the patriot officers at Gilbert Town, with plenty of prisoners in their hands to choose from, very naturally concluded that a conspicuous act of retaliation was in order, and would have a restraining influence on Cornwallis and a terrorizing effect on loyalists who thought of joining his standard.

In some modern histories the episode has been softened by confusing it with the irregular shooting after the surrender, and by representing it as a mere act of excitement among the rank and file which was soon stopped by their officers. This view of it has the advantage of saddling the British with all deliberate prisoner killing, while the Americans stand guilty of nothing more than some mistaken action in the heat of passion. But the original evidence collected by Draper, especially Shelby's account, shows that the hanging at Gilbert Town was the deliberate act of officers, and of a court which conducted its proceedings in as official and formal a manner as possible.

The conviction of nearly forty of the prisoners perhaps indicates an intention of equalling the list of Cornwallis's hangings; and the selection for actual death of only about a dozen of the most prominent and respectable may have been afterwards thought a more moderate but equally effective method of retaliation and terror. It was no doubt well calculated to deter the prominent and capable people of the country from becoming leaders of loyalism in the British interest. It struck at Cornwallis's plans of organizing a great loyalist uprising among Americans; and Shelby said that it checked the hanging of patriots by the British.

There was no check, however, in the bloody private and neighborhood feuds between patriots and loyalists; and the

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<sup>4</sup> Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. vii, p. 370.

## DISPOSAL OF PRISONERS

British, although they may have hesitated to indulge in as many hangings as formerly, soon made another shipment of prominent South Carolina patriots to St. Augustine, because "they discovered no disposition to return to their allegiance and would, if in their power, overthrow the British Government."<sup>5</sup>

The riflemen need not have been in such haste to leave Gilbert Town; for Tarleton instead of being hot upon their heels was with Cornwallis, flying for safety to South Carolina. So far from pursuing the riflemen, he and Cornwallis believed themselves to be pursued by the over-mountain barbarians, "the dirty mongrels," the "back-water men" whom rumor had represented as 3000 strong and as monsters in stature and ferocity.

The 600 prisoners, dwindling in numbers from escapes, killing and executions, had ever since the battle been a source of serious difficulty. The southern patriots were like the Boers of South Africa in their war for independence; they hardly knew what to do with their prisoners and had no place to keep them. After leaving Gilbert Town the riflemen had gone directly north to put the Catawba between themselves and Tarleton; and that done they felt safe. The over-mountain men, most of the Virginians and the South Carolina troops, now went to their respective homes; and the North Carolina men under Cleveland took charge of the prisoners, marched them still farther northward, and then turned eastward through those curious old Moravian settlements of North Carolina, which were strongly loyalist. The object was to take the prisoners towards Hillsboro to Gates and receive his instructions in regard to them.<sup>6</sup>

The subsequent history of the prisoners shows the total lack of organization and the hand-to-mouth way in which the patriot cause in the South survived. Gates could not decide

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<sup>5</sup> Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iii, pp. 402, 409; vol. iv, p. 28; B. F. Stevens, "Clinton-Cornwallis Controversy," vol. i, pp. 185, 261, 303; Draper, "King's Mountain," &c., pp. 372, 373, 544, 545, 557.

<sup>6</sup> Draper, *id.*, pp. 349-352.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

what to do. He thought of sending the prisoners to the Chiswell lead mines in Virginia; but was told that that region was strongly loyalist; and most other places seemed to have the same objection. He finally referred the subject to Thomas Jefferson, then Governor of Virginia, and Jefferson referred it to the Congress, which directed that the prisoners be turned over to the patriot governors of the states of which they had been citizens. But this request could not be carried out because the patriot government of North Carolina could barely exist, and the patriot government of South Carolina had no existence at all.

Meantime the prisoners were steadily escaping by dozens, twos and threes, until in December only 130 were left and soon after only 60. Some few had become patriots; but most of them disappeared to their homes or rejoined the British. Lieutenant Allaire has left us an interesting account of his escape with three companions, when the prisoners had reached the Moravian towns. Sleeping in fodder-houses and woods by day and tramping at night they travelled across North Carolina down to Ninety-Six and thence to Charleston. They were passed along from one loyalist family to another, furnished with guides, food and concealment and at times with horses. It was a half wilderness region and they often heard the wolves howling at night. They occasionally heard of or passed the small patriot bands which like similar loyalist bands prowled through the country. But so numerous were the loyalists and neutrals that once the prison bounds were passed escape was comparatively easy.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Draper, "King's Mountain and Its Heroes," pp. 355, 358-369, 513; Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. ix, p. 99.

## XC.

### THE RETREAT OF CORNWALLIS AND GREENE'S DARING STRATEGY

WHEN Cornwallis finally learned of the total defeat of Ferguson it was such a surprise and shock to him, that his imagination pictured the most terrible consequences. Believing from rumor that the riflemen were 3000 strong, he feared they would sweep down behind him into South Carolina and capture Camden and Ninety-Six. He saw that the loyalist uprising in North Carolina was hopelessly discouraged. In what seems very much like a panic he sent messages to recall Tarleton, who had at last gone to the rescue of Ferguson; and without waiting for his return he hastily abandoned Charlotte and started southward.

His guide was a patriot in disguise, who cleverly lost him just at nightfall, and the troops wandered and scattered themselves in the darkness. They were in great alarm lest the terrible mountain men should pounce upon them; and they could not be collected until noon the next day.

It required two weeks of marching, privation and hardships to bring them to Winnsborough, South Carolina. Many were sick and died on the march of what they called the yellow fever. It may have been only malaria or the southern bilious fever of those days; but its ravages and the condition of extreme emaciation to which the sufferers were reduced may indicate that it was something worse.

On several days it rained heavily, and the slippery red mud became almost impassable for horses. The loyalists put themselves in the harness and showed how to drag the wagons up slippery hills and across Sugar Creek. They also showed the troops how to live upon the country and grate the raw corn in the fields by rubbing it on a tin canteen punched full of

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

holes. For five days the troops lived on this corn alone. They were incapable of foraging for themselves and obtaining the half wild cattle that roamed in the woods. The loyalist militiamen, accustomed to the country, obtained supplies for them and saved them from starvation. But all the thanks the loyalists received was to be cursed and beaten by the officers with the regulation affectation of contempt for colonists and provincials.

Patriot bands cut off their foraging parties and were constantly picking off men from behind trees. An excursion of only a few hundred yards from the camp was unsafe, and they were not safe in the camp itself; for patriot sharpshooters would creep up close, select their victim and escape.

Cornwallis was taken ill of the fever, and, before he recovered, directed his second in command, Lord Rawdon, to write to Clinton that no reliance could be placed upon the loyalists, and that it would not be worth while to attempt to join them in North Carolina and run the risk of losing South Carolina. He foresaw, he said, many difficulties and objections to carrying on the defensive policy of his superior; but for the present, he must continue it; for, as he frankly admits, its dangers were not so great as those which he now saw would for the present attend his own more aggressive plan.<sup>1</sup>

He had certainly made a bad muddle. If the loyalists of North Carolina had ever intended to rise and sweep upward into Virginia, they were now utterly discouraged. They had seen their own army under Ferguson defeated, shot down and captured to a man; and their supposed protectors, Cornwallis and the British regulars, they had seen flying in panic to South Carolina. And all this because Cornwallis had violated a well-known military rule, weakened himself by making an isolated

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<sup>1</sup> B. F. Stevens, "Clinton-Cornwallis Controversy," vol. i, pp. 44 note, 103, 263, 278, 279; Taileton's Campaign, p. 166; Diaper, "King's Mountain and Its Heroes," pp. 367-371; Stedman, "American War," edition 1794, vol. ii, p. 225; "Life of Colonel Hanger," p. 179; Lee, Memoirs, vol. i, p. 211; Stedman, "American War," vol. ii, pp. 224, 225,



## A NEW TURNING POINT

detachment and given the Americans the same opportunity Howe had given them at Trenton and Burgoyne at Bennington.

The Battle of King's Mountain marked a turning point in the Revolution more definitely than Burgoyne's surrender at Saratoga. Saratoga secured for us the open assistance of France; but in spite of that assistance our efforts for independence had almost failed when King's Mountain began a new series of events. "It was the first perceivable event," said Shelby, "that gave a favorable turn to the American Revolution."<sup>2</sup>

The battle, however, did not in itself cause the favorable turn as the language of Shelby might imply. Cornwallis might have recovered from the effects of the battle, if he had continued to obey Clinton's orders and carry out Clinton's plans. The battle is more properly described as marking the first result of the new British theory of action, the theory of Cornwallis which for the rest of the war overrides the methods of Clinton, breaks up the system which had been in force for two years and brings about the final result.

But for a month or two Cornwallis could not go on with his plans. It was all he could do to save South Carolina from relapsing to patriotism. Elated and aroused by the success of the riflemen the South Carolina patriot bands again seized their arms, attacked the loyalists and raided up to the gates of Charleston. "There was scarce an inhabitant," said Cornwallis, "between the Santee and the Pedee that was not in arms against us."

He had in a measure to begin over again the conquest of South Carolina. He ordered Major Wemys and Tarleton to break up this new rebellion and attack Sumter who, after his band had been broken and scattered immediately after the American defeat at Camden, had quickly collected another. He had now about three hundred banditti, as Cornwallis called them, and with other partisan leaders, Bauner and Clark, was making life terrible for the loyalists. Major Wemys

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<sup>2</sup>Draper, "King's Mountain and Its Heroes," p. 560.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

attempted to surprise him on the 12th of November, and according to the British account was partly successful; but Wemys was wounded and taken prisoner and his force retreated.

The South Carolina patriots now cried victory, and according to Cornwallis's account, "the whole country came in fast to join Sumter," whose men increased to a thousand. Tarleton was put in pursuit, and in attempting a surprise failed, but cut to pieces, it is said, Sumter's rear guard in crossing the Enoree River and forced him to take a strong position on Black Stocks Hill, close to the Tyger River. The American and British accounts of the battle which followed are totally different. According to the Americans, Sumter was protected by a small stream, brushwood and a rail fence in front and a log barn from which riflemen could shoot in safety. Tarleton made one of his whirlwind dashes of loyalist cavalry, lost one-third of his force and retired ingloriously with no satisfaction except that Sumter was seriously wounded. But Cornwallis describes Tarleton attacking with only two hundred and seventy men, driving the one thousand Americans across the river, and dispersing them after killing and wounding one hundred and twenty with a loss to himself of only fifty.<sup>3</sup>

In any event, Cornwallis seems to have in a great measure recovered his former control of South Carolina. But in North Carolina the patriots were rapidly gaining the upper hand. From his headquarters at Hillsboro, Gates was reorganizing the militia, and on the 8th of November some of his troops took possession of Salisbury, which Cornwallis had hoped to hold. Counting Ferguson's loss and the results of skirmishing with riflemen and guerillas, Gates could now announce to the Congress that the British had had the worst of the campaign, having lost more men than the Americans, and having abandoned

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<sup>3</sup> Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iii, p. 471; Draper, "King's Mountain and Its Heroes," pp. 376, 377; B. F. Stevens, "Clinton-Cornwallis Controversy," vol. i, pp. 303, 307, 315; Lee, *Memoirs*, vol. i, pp. 213-220; Tarleton, "Narrative," pp. 178, 204; Stedman, "American War," vol. ii, pp. 228-236.

## GREENE DEFENDS GATES

large districts of territory which they had supposed that they had conquered.<sup>4</sup>

North Carolina was free from the British. Gates had learned, from his recent misfortune, the danger of precipitancy, and was proceeding with caution and disposing his forces with more intelligence. But nothing he could do would atone for his disastrous defeat at Camden, and the abandonment of Charlotte. The northern patriots and the Congress had lost all confidence in him. A court of inquiry was ordered, and he was superseded in the command by the appointment of General Greene.<sup>5</sup>

Greene always defended Gates and disapproved of any censure on his misfortune.

“General Gates left this country under a heavy load; and I can assure you he did not deserve it. If he was to be blamed for anything at all, it was for fighting, not for what he did or did not do in or after the action. I have been upon the ground where he was defeated, and I think it was well chosen, and the troops properly drawn up; and had he halted after the defeat at Charlotte, without doing the least thing, I am persuaded there would have been as little mumbling upon that occasion, as in any instance whatever, where the public met with a misfortune of equal magnitude.” (Gordon, “American Revolution,” edition 1788, vol. iv, p. 98. See also vol. iii, p. 475.)

Meantime, before his successor arrived, Gates had returned with his newly collected army to Charlotte and had outposts still farther south on the road to Camden in South Carolina. Morgan, of the famous rifle corps, now at last promoted to the rank of general, had joined him; and Gates was soon able to report two brilliant successes by Sumter.

On the 2d of December, General Greene arrived at Charlotte and took command, closing the service of Gates in the Revolution. To his misfortunes of loss of command and of the confidence of the Congress and of his party, the retiring general had also to endure the recent announcement of the death of

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<sup>4</sup> Gordon, “American Revolution,” edition 1788, vol. iii, p. 469.

<sup>5</sup> Gordon, “American Revolution,” edition 1788, vol. iii, p. 469; Lee, “Memoirs,” vol. i, pp. 224, 225.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

his son. He returned northward, with dignity and composure, and retired to his farm in Berkeley County, Virginia. In passing through Richmond the Virginia legislature received him with distinguished consideration and the magnanimity of the Roman Senate. "The remembrance of his former glorious services could not," they assured him, "be obliterated by any reverse of fortune." America owed him a debt of gratitude for Saratoga, that could never be forgotten.<sup>a</sup>

General Gates is not one of the popular officers of the Revolution; but in considering his whole career, it must be confessed that his services had been valuable at times, especially in organizing. His worst trait was a cunning, petty intriguing to undermine other officers by suggestion and innuendo. In actual warfare he certainly had sufficient skill to use his superior numbers so as to keep Burgoyne wearing himself out until surrender was inevitable. But in the field, Gates was not at his best; and he was, no doubt, aware of his weakness. With no faculty for seeing or seizing any of the sudden advantages that occur on a battle-field, he naturally would prefer to leave the conduct of his army on such occasions to trustworthy subordinates. This accounts for his keeping so much in the background in his battles with Burgoyne; and it was a wise decision; for in Arnold and Morgan he had officers whose minds were notorious for their quickness and intelligence in the midst of smoke and slaughter.

At Camden, his plan of surprising Cornwallis at night was a simple and good one, except that it was contrary to military rule to attempt to move raw, undisciplined militia at night in the neighborhood of an enterprising enemy. But whatever merit was in his plan was frustrated by the curious coincidence of Cornwallis starting at the same time to surprise him. When the two forces met halfway, it was the very predicament for which Gates was unfitted. We can readily imagine Arnold, Wayne or Morgan rescuing their army from serious defeat on such an occasion, or possibly achieving a victory. But Gates,

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<sup>a</sup> Lee, "Memoirs," vol. i, p. 235 note.



## RUGELEY'S MILLS

an Englishman, was never able to acquire the traits of quickness and versatility which were so strikingly exhibited in some of our officers of native stock. When his troops gave way he could do no more than go along with them in the retreat.

On the 2d of December, the day that Greene took command, Colonel William Washington, a distant relative of the commander-in-chief, with some light cavalry, reconnoitred Clermont, or Rugeley's Mills, which he found occupied by loyalists, protected by a log barn and abatis. Washington was a young officer who had been wounded in the wrist at Trenton, escaped in the massacre of Baylor's Virginia Cavalry at Tappan, and was now just coming into prominence.

Seeing that the log barn and its defences could be penetrated only by artillery, and judging that the loyalists were relying on this security, he had his men shape the trunk of a pine tree in imitation of a field piece, and with much parade plant it in sight of the loyalists, whose surrender was then demanded with the utmost formality. Colonel Rugeley, believing that his defences would soon be shot through by heavy balls, yielded at once, and his men, a hundred or more in number, were, to the great disgrace of loyalism, taken prisoners without firing a shot.<sup>7</sup>

This was a cheering success, which raised the reputation of young Washington, and combined with the arrival of their new commander, put all the southern army in a confident and jovial mood. The game of war, now that the Congress had aroused itself to active operations in the South, was becoming complicated and momentous. North Carolina was the great prize dangling before the eyes of Cornwallis and the Ministry, to be followed, they hoped, by Virginia.

When Cornwallis was contemplating his invasion of North Carolina, which ended in the disaster to Ferguson, he had, as we have seen, written to Clinton to send a force into Virginia to coöperate with him when he should reach that state after

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<sup>7</sup> Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iii, p. 473; Lee, *Memoirs*, vol. i, p. 245; Tarleton, *Narrative*, p. 182.



## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

having crossed North Carolina. Clinton complied, and sent 3000 men under command of General Leslie, who was directed to obey the orders of Cornwallis.

Leslie arrived in Virginia in the end of October, and established himself at Portsmouth opposite Norfolk. The state seems to have been almost defenceless, for Leslie destroyed shipping, tobacco, and supplies, and moved about the country pretty much as he pleased. While engaged in this work, he received a message from Cornwallis suggesting that he go to Cape Fear River in North Carolina, and also if possible to South Carolina. Leslie accordingly took his force by sea to Cape Fear, but receiving a more urgent message he went to Charleston, on the 14th of December, and afterwards joined Cornwallis in the interior.<sup>8</sup>

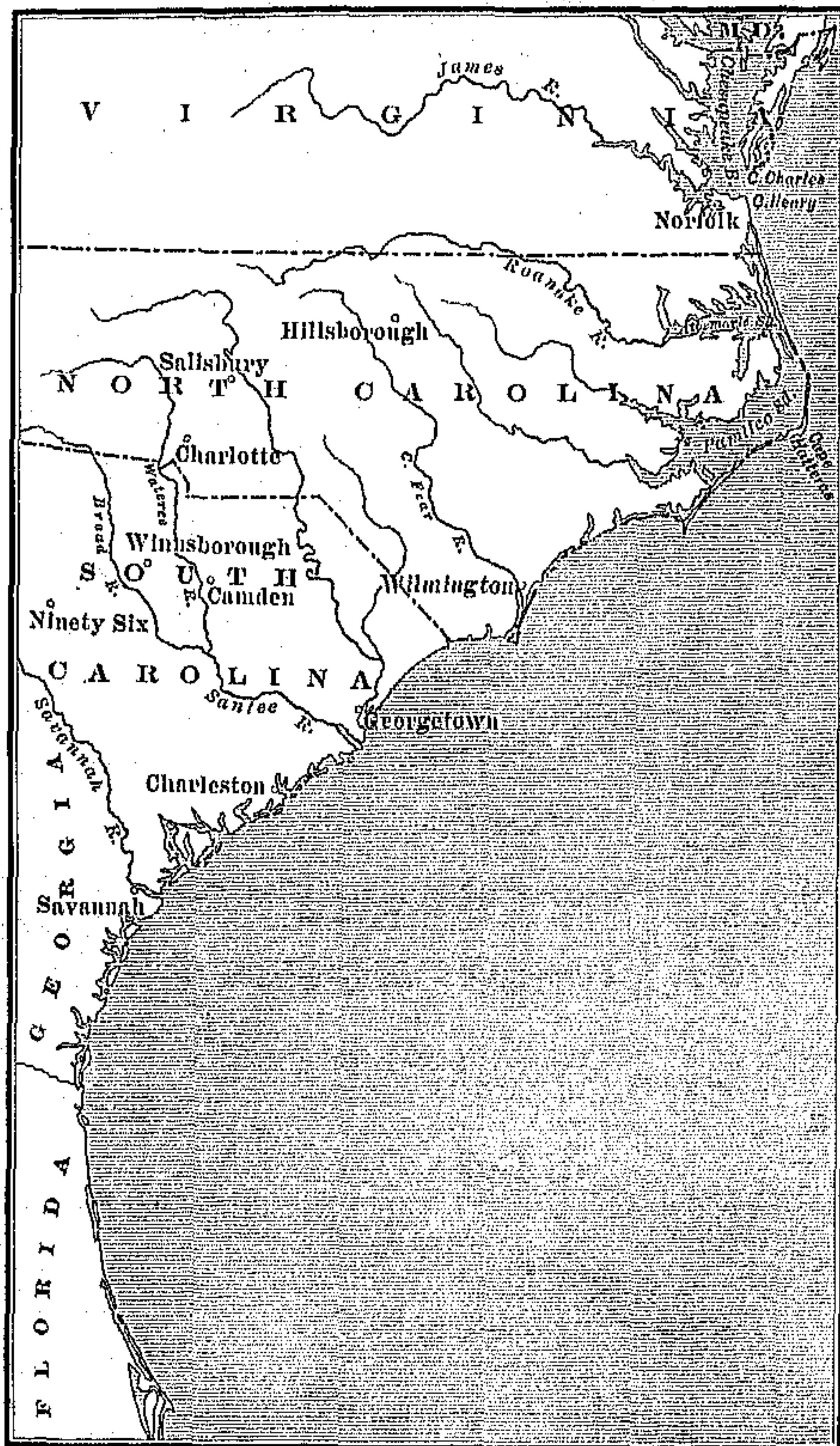
From this it would seem as if Cornwallis had abandoned, at least for the present, his original plan of invading North Carolina and Virginia; and the letter Lord Rawdon wrote to Leslie intimates as much when it says, "Lord Cornwallis cannot hope that he shall be able to undertake anything upon such a scale as either to aid you or to benefit from you in our present situation." Clinton had been willing that an experiment should be made in North Carolina to see what could be done.<sup>9</sup> But that experiment having been tried with lamentable failure, the safer and sounder policy for Cornwallis was to remain in South Carolina and Georgia, make sure of their safety and see what the new patriot commander, Greene, would do.

Cornwallis seemed now to be following this conservative course. He arranged his force so that his centre was at Winnsborough, his right at Camden, and his left at Ninety-Six. These three posts, Camden, Winnsborough and Ninety-Six, held by 3224 men, covered, it will be observed from the map, a stretch of country crossing the Wateree, the Broad and the

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<sup>8</sup> Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. ix, pp. 86 note, 87 note; B. F. Stevens, "Clinton-Cornwallis Controversy," vol. i, pp. 269, 270, 274, 276, 284, 286, 287, 289, 294-296, 298, 301-303, 308, 310, 313, 317, 318; Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iii, p. 491.

<sup>9</sup> B. F. Stevens, "Clinton-Cornwallis Controversy," vol. i, p. 102.



MAP OF BRITISH OCCUPATION OF SOUTH CAROLINA.

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## ABILITY OF GREENE

Saluda rivers. It was a strong position, backed by a rich fertile district, and with reinforcements in Charleston and the posts at Georgetown and other points, made a very complete occupation of South Carolina. When we consider that Georgia was occupied in a similar way, and East Florida held at St. Augustine, we have the high-water mark of British success in the South.<sup>10</sup>

The situation was a delicate one, which called for the exercise of the utmost judgment and discretion on the part of Cornwallis; for the patriot Congress, now thoroughly aroused to the necessity of no longer relying on France and Spain, had sent an able general not only to protect North Carolina, but to break, if he could, the British hold to the southward.

General Greene, a stout, portly man, thirty-eight years old, of mild, genial manners, and not altogether robust health, was an interesting instance of a Rhode Island Quaker with a natural genius for war. In battle, in the quartermaster's department, in the discipline of camp, and in all details of organization he had shown a superior understanding of every phase of military life. As a field officer he was the equal of Morgan, Wayne, and Arnold, and in grasp of important questions and general strategy he was far their superior. In all these large matters his ideas were original and his judgment quick and unerring.

To meet the 3000 men under Cornwallis, Greene had nominally 2307; but only 1482 of these were present and fit for duty. In January 700 reinforcements were added, bringing his effective force to a little over 2000. But these 2000 men were destitute of every comfort and convenience; ragged, naked and barefooted; without magazines, and dependent for their food on daily seizures and collections in the neighborhood. They were mere volunteers held together by public opinion, and many of them would often leave without permission and go home for several weeks.

To stop this practice, Greene, soon after his arrival, ordered that the next man guilty of this sort of desertion should be

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<sup>10</sup> G. W. Greene, "Life of General Greene," vol. iii, pp. 128, 129.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

shot. But so insecure was his authority that he had to send his officers about among the men to listen to their conversation and see if public opinion approved this new act of discipline. Finding that it was approved, he gradually increased his severity, and during the next six months this increasing discipline saved him from the fate of Gates.<sup>11</sup>

On his way down from the North Greene had made the best arrangements he could with the patriot governors of Delaware, Maryland and Virginia to furnish his army with men, provisions and clothes. North Carolina was almost denuded. The patriot militia as well as the loyalists and British had ravaged it until it would no longer support an army. Greene's support and supplies must all come from the North; from Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, and even from Philadelphia, which, under the directions of the Congress, would, he hoped, supply him with arms, tools, clothes and accoutrements. It was impossible to obtain even felling-axes in North Carolina. The army was destitute of even lint and bandages, and everything of this sort, together with a large part of his provisions, must be transported from the North by the slow method of wagons driven along wilderness roads for hundreds of miles.<sup>12</sup>

So many wagons had been captured by the British, when Gates was defeated at Camden, that the greatest efforts of the governors of Virginia, Maryland and Delaware, and of the Congress at Philadelphia, could scarcely procure any more. The public credit of the governments of those states was exhausted, and impressment was of little avail. Greene's supplies, therefore, arrived as slowly as his reinforcements and he could never hope to have much of an army.

His long line of communications back to the north would have afforded a grand opportunity to the British if they could have penetrated far enough inland to reach the roads by which the wagons travelled. An active enterprising enemy would

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<sup>11</sup> G. W. Greene, "Life of General Greene," vol. iii, pp. 70, 93; Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iv, pp. 27, 28.

<sup>12</sup> G. W. Greene, "Life of General Greene," vol. iii, pp. 55, 57, 58, 61, 65, 66, 74, 85.



## GREENE'S STRATEGY

have done this and wrecked all of Greene's hopes. But as Cornwallis had called Leslie's force from Virginia to strengthen his base at Charleston, Greene had little or nothing to fear for his communications, especially as he had left Baron Steuben in Virginia in command of the militia of that state.

The plan adopted by Greene for dealing with the superior force of Cornwallis was very original and would have been quite beyond the capacity of Gates. The great mistake of Gates had been that he was in too much of a hurry to attack. Greene was determined never to be forced into a hurried measure of any kind, to take his own time for everything, to be attacked rather than to attack, and then to be in a position of his own choosing.

Except for this conservative principle, his plan was the most audacious and ingenious piece of military strategy of the war. Dividing his force into two divisions, he took the larger one of about 1100 men under his own command to a place on the east side of the Pedee River, below Hicks Creek, at the site of the modern town of Chatham and near Cheraw Hill. This position was east of Camden and, therefore, on the right flank of Cornwallis. The other division under Morgan he sent round to take a position that would threaten Cornwallis's left flank and make him uneasy for the safety of Ninety-Six. Thus Greene was seventy miles to the right of Cornwallis, and Morgan fifty miles from Cornwallis's left.<sup>18</sup>

The reason for this rather startling plan of dividing an inferior force to meet a superior force was, that Cornwallis could not start to invade North Carolina without having both his flanks assailed and losing, perhaps, two important posts, Camden and Ninety-Six, if he went north leaving them weakly garrisoned. If he decided not to invade North Carolina the two patriot divisions would be in the best position to annoy him, cut off his foraging parties and carry on partisan warfare. The two patriot divisions would also be able to forage in the

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<sup>18</sup> G. W. Greene, "Life of General Greene," vol. iii, pp. 84, 91, 129-131.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

fertile region from which Cornwallis drew his supplies, and be relieved from attempting to live at Charlotte or Salisbury where there was not subsistence for half their number. As an invasion of South Carolina, this plan of flanking Cornwallis would also tend to rally and encourage the depressed patriots of that state; and it was very important to encourage them before their spirit was utterly broken and they became reconciled to their misfortunes.<sup>14</sup>

The apparent recklessness of Greene's plan of dividing his force astonished the British, and Tarleton believed that he would never have adopted such a hazardous plan if he had known that Leslie's command from Virginia was about to reinforce Cornwallis.<sup>15</sup>

There was, of course, great danger in having violated the well-known rule of warfare and split the patriot force into two isolated detachments which might be beaten in detail. Washington, as we have already seen, had several times warned his officers of the great risk they ran whenever they violated this rule. He had himself nearly lost 2000 of his best troops by putting them in an isolated position under Lafayette at Barren Hill. Burgoyne had afforded another instance at Bennington, and Ferguson at King's Mountain. Howe had lost his isolated detachment at Trenton in the beginning of the war; and military history was strewn thick with other instances.

We can readily imagine a Washington, a Grant, a Lee, a Napoleon, or even General Howe when in earnest, taking a sudden and sure advantage of Greene's division of his army into two isolated bodies. But Cornwallis was not to be compared to any of those generals; and Greene, no doubt, had taken the measure of his opponent and understood his limitations along with the other circumstances of the situation.

The American troops were notoriously quicker in all their

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<sup>14</sup> Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iv, p. 30; G. W. Greene, "Life of General Greene," vol. iii, p. 51; Lee, *Memoirs*, vol. i, p. 247.

<sup>15</sup> Tarleton, *Narrative*, p. 208.

## GREENE SATISFIED

movements than the English; and if the isolated divisions exercised extreme watchfulness they might escape from a general like Cornwallis. The larger division at Chatham had the Pedee River in front, as a protection, and had a good chance to retire if too strong a move were made against it, or to fight if a weaker move were made. The smaller division was light, mobile and under command of one of the most watchful, cautious and intelligent wilderness fighters in the army. He was instructed by Greene to take no risks, and to retreat if attacked. In fact, both divisions were to act according to the rules of partisan warfare. They were to raid, annoy, make sudden surprises and escape; and this dividing of the patriot army into two isolated bodies should, perhaps, be judged by the rules of the partisan, rather than by the science of the regular strategist.

General Greene, who now took upon himself the responsibility of this delicate and momentous plan, reached his post at Chatham on the 26th of December, 1780, and the more he reflected on the disposition he had made of his army, the better he was pleased.

"I am well satisfied with the movement, for it has answered thus far all the purposes for which I intended it. It makes the most of my inferior force, for it compels my adversary to divide his, and holds him in doubt as to his own line of conduct. He cannot leave Morgan behind him to come at me, or his posts of Ninety-Six and Augusta would be exposed. And he cannot chase Morgan far or prosecute his views upon Virginia, while I am here with the whole country open before me. I am as near Charleston as he is, and as near to Hillsborough as I was at Charlotte; so that I am in no danger of being cut off from my reinforcements; while an uncertainty as to my future designs has made it necessary to leave a large detachment of the enemy's late reinforcements in Charleston, and move the rest up on this side the Wateree. But although there is nothing to obstruct my march to Charleston, I am far from having such a design in contemplation, in the present relative positions and strength of the two armies. It would be putting it in the power of my enemy to compel me to fight him." (G. W. Greene, "Life of General Greene," vol. iii, p. 131.)

He goes on to explain that his movements must be confined to the upper waters of those numerous muddy rivers which

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

crossed the Carolinas in a southeasterly direction. The lower courses of these streams flowed through a level country with no passes or hills that would give an inferior force the advantage; and the rivers in this lower part of their course were not fordable, and often flowed through great swamps, which sometimes became lakes, and across which, at long intervals, roads or causeways had been constructed which could easily be destroyed and render an army helpless. To enable himself to move rapidly in the upper hilly country, and cross the streams when swollen by floods, Greene was constructing flat-bottomed boats to be transported on wheels with his army; and this proved to be a very important part of his plan for escape.

On the 12th of January he was joined by Colonel Harry Lee, of Virginia, the famous Light Horse Harry, with his legion of picked men, 100 cavalry and 180 infantry, the most thoroughly disciplined and best equipped scouts and raiders of the Revolution. Their horses were powerful, well bred and kept in high condition. They were one of the very few bodies of patriot troops that wore a uniform in the field. Their short green coats almost exactly resembled the dress of some of the *British light troops*, and the resemblance may have been intentional, for it was of great service to them on at least one occasion. In their marches the infantry were sometimes mounted behind the cavalry and sometimes took turns at riding the horses. We have already seen something of Light Horse Lee in the North. He was one of the well-educated, talented young Virginians of that time. His memoirs of the war, with their pleasing touches of his classical training, are the keenest military criticisms of the Revolution that have come down to us. He was now beginning a congenial and brilliant career in the South. He soon joined Marion in a dash at Georgetown on the coast, capturing the commander, driving the rest of the garrison into the post and retreating as swiftly and safely as he had arrived.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iv, p. 32; Lee, *Memoirs*, vol. i, pp. 248-251, 283, 308; vol. ii, p. 89.

## MORGAN'S POSITION

This was, no doubt, the sort of warfare Greene intended to carry on so long as Cornwallis made no effort to attack him or invade North Carolina. All things considered, Greene had made a most daring and clever move on the chess board, and as it turned out, the result of the whole Revolution depended on the decision which Cornwallis made in reply to it.

Morgan had passed round the left flank of Cornwallis until he was at Grindall's Ford on the Pacolet River, not much more than forty-five miles from Ninety-Six. His forces increased from 580 to about 800 men. Colonel Washington surprised a body of 250 loyalists who were raiding round Fairfort Creek and cut them to pieces, killing and wounding 150 and taking 40 prisoners. He even penetrated to a little stockaded log house, called Fort William, within 15 miles of Ninety-Six, and would have captured the garrison if they had not abandoned their fort and fled at his approach.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Graham, "Life of General Morgan," p. 202; G. W. Greene, "Life of General Greene," vol. iii, p. 135.



## XCI.

### THE BATTLE OF COWPENS

CORNWALLIS was now compelled to do something to check Morgan who, indeed, might have made a raid into Georgia if a warning from Greene to be careful had not restrained him. Cornwallis accordingly resolved to wipe out Morgan and advance into North Carolina at the same time. He had just received from Charleston the reinforcement of 1500 under Leslie from Virginia, and ordering that force to follow him, he moved northward. Tarleton meanwhile was sent to make a direct attack upon Morgan and either crush him or force him northward, where Cornwallis with the main body would intercept his retreat and annihilate him.

That being accomplished, says Cornwallis:

"I likewise hoped by rapid marches to get between General Greene and Virginia, and by that means force him to fight, without receiving *any reinforcement from that province; or, failing of that, to oblige him to quit North Carolina with precipitation, and thereby encourage our friends to make good their promises of a general rising to assist me in reëstablishing his Majesty's government.*" ("Clinton-Cornwallis Controversy," vol. i, pp. 313, 355.)

Tarleton, who went to attack Morgan, had only a slight superiority in numbers; and Cornwallis kept the main body of the army so far away that it was useless. It was strange that he should repeat the same mistake he had made when he lost Ferguson's command.

Morgan, having information of the exact disposition of the British forces, conducted his retreat with characteristic coolness and intelligence. He abandoned his position at the ford on the Pacolet and retired northward, intending to cross the Broad River and be in a position to cross the next stream, the Catawba, if Cornwallis should press him.

## MORGAN AT BROAD RIVER

After marching, however, for two days, pursued by Tarleton, and reaching the Broad River, he found that Cornwallis had not gone far enough north to intercept him. He, therefore, did not cross the Broad, and decided to stop and fight Tarleton at the Cowpens, a name given to a place where, as we have already seen, a certain loyalist collected his cattle and where the riflemen assembled before the battle of King's Mountain.

It was a momentous decision to stop and fight rather than continue the retreat. It was hardly in keeping with his instructions from Greene. But to keep on retreating from a dashing young upstart like Tarleton must have been extremely distasteful to Morgan, who was accustomed to aggressiveness and victory. He was too much influenced, it has been supposed, by this feeling of anger at being pursued; and if he had crossed the river he could, it is said, have found much better ground more favorable to his infantry and more disadvantageous to the cavalry of Tarleton. "His decision," says Harry Lee, "grew out of irritation of temper, which appears to have overruled the suggestions of his sound and discriminating judgment." But Lee was inclined to be jealous. Morgan had a definite plan of his own, and Lee with his usual candor admits that even if Morgan's position was erroneous, his disposition for battle was masterly.<sup>1</sup>

Various traditional stories have come down to us of the conduct of this passionate frontiersman, now a seasoned and experienced veteran, on the evening before the battle. He wandered among his men, they say, joking them about their sweethearts, picking up their swords to give them lessons, and then with upraised arm and all the rhetoric of the frontier, would tell them that "the old wagoner would crack his whip over Ben Tarleton in the morning."<sup>2</sup>

His plan of action was curiously original, evidently wrought

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<sup>1</sup> Lee, *Memoirs*, vol. i, p. 253.

<sup>2</sup> Graham, "Life of General Morgan," pp. 202, 202; G. W. Greene, "Life of General Greene," vol. iii, p. 135.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

out by long experience and careful thought. He had a great many militia, and would they ruin him as they had ruined Gates at Camden? They were despised by all the continental officers. Washington considered them very nearly useless, except as mere skirmishers, and he had condensed his contempt for them into the axiom: "No militia will ever acquire the habits necessary to resist a regular force." But Morgan had invented a way of handling them which, as it turned out, revolutionized the patriot method of fighting in the South.<sup>3</sup>

The ground he had selected seemed to all regular practitioners of war decidedly unfavorable for him. It was an open space of some five hundred yards gradually rising into a small hill and falling away again to rise into another slight elevation. The open space would seem to give an advantage to Tarleton's favorite arm, the cavalry. The Broad River in the rear cut off all chance for the patriots to retreat, and there was no protection for their flanks.

As to his flanks, Morgan said they needed no protection, for Tarleton never attacked in that way; and as to the river in his rear, it was, he said, the very thing he wanted, for it would prevent his militia from leaving him. He wished to cut off all hope of retreat and place the militia in such a tight place that they would sell their lives dearly. "Had I crossed the river," he said, "one-half the militia would immediately have abandoned me."

He placed the militia far in the front to receive the first onset of the British, and told them that he expected them to fire only two volleys at killing distance. After that they could run; and he showed them how to run round the left flank of the rest of his troops, and get behind the main body, where they could re-form at their leisure and recover themselves; and he knew the river would prevent their escaping. There seems to have been infinite shrewdness in this arrangement, although it was in opposition to the opinions of most American officers.

About one hundred and fifty yards behind the militia Mor-

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<sup>3</sup> Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. viii, pp. 440, 506.

## TARLETON DEFEATED

gan placed his picked troops on the small hill, and told them not to be alarmed when they saw the militia retreat, for that was part of the plan. One hundred and fifty yards farther back he placed his cavalry under Colonel Washington.

Tarleton had about 1000 men, so that in numbers as well as in regular discipline he had a superiority over the 800 patriots.<sup>4</sup> With his infantry in the centre, flanked by dragoons, he attacked in his usual dashing style, on the morning of the 17th of January, 1781. He had been so uneasy lest Morgan should escape across the river, that as soon as he came in sight of the patriots he prepared for battle without waiting to refresh his tired troops.

As he came on to the charge Morgan's skirmishers emptied fifteen of his saddles; and the militia knowing exactly what they were to do, behaved much better than was expected. They delivered their "two fires at killing distance," and then retreated as they had been told. The British instantly spread out and rushed at the second line of Americans, intending to flank them on both sides. The second line avoided this movement by falling back to the position of the cavalry. At the same time the cavalry circled round and attacked the British right flank, and the militia, having been re-formed, circled round the other side and attacked the British left. The second line retreated no farther, and having delivered their fire, charged the British.

The loss of the Americans was the extraordinarily small one of only 12 killed and 61 wounded. But Tarleton's regulars, utterly unprepared for this new method of fighting, were completely demoralized and broken. They were soon flying for their lives, throwing away their arms, or begging for mercy, while the patriots, shouting "Tarleton's quarters," would have begun a general massacre if they had not been stopped by their officers. They had killed 100 Englishmen, wounded upwards

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<sup>4</sup> The numbers are sometimes given as 1100 for Tarleton and 900 for Morgan; but the numbers in the text are those given by Morgan in his report. Myers, "Cowpens Papers," p. 26.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

of 200 and taken 600 prisoners. In fact, Tarleton was almost as completely routed as Ferguson had been, and was lucky to escape with his life.<sup>5</sup>

He had handled his men on much the same principle that Ferguson handled his loyalist command at King's Mountain. He had abandoned all attempt at shooting and relied entirely on charging with the bayonet. In fact, that was all there was of Tarleton's tactics; a sudden dash, usually delivered early in the morning, and if that failed, he had no other methods or resources. Morgan, having carefully observed and studied this British charging habit, had arranged his men so as to encourage the enemy to charge as far as possible and exhaust themselves. The three separate bodies of American troops being one hundred and fifty yards apart, under instructions to fall back from the charge in an orderly manner, gave the English a run of over 300 yards, at the end of which, when they supposed themselves victorious, they were suddenly charged by fresh troops and their flanks enveloped.

The credit of inventing this method and putting the militia in front to receive the first onset seems to belong entirely to Morgan. Greene adopted it in the subsequent battles of Guilford Court House and Eutaw Springs, varying it to meet peculiar circumstances, and unwisely, perhaps, at Guilford, increasing the length of the open spaces over which he encouraged the enemy to charge.

While charging over the long distances, the British could not shoot, and the American marksmen had an opportunity to pick them off. It was this which caused such heavy loss to the British at Guilford Court House, where they finally compelled the Americans to retire. Another important part of the method

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<sup>5</sup> *Magazine of American History*, vol. xxx, p. 207; G. W. Greene, "Life of General Greene," vol. iii, p. 147; Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iv, p. 33; B. F. Stevens, "Clinton-Cornwallis Controversy," vol. i, pp. 319-321; Draper, "King's Mountain and Its Heroes," p. 285 note; Lee, *Memoirs*, vol. i, pp. 256-266; Tarleton, *Narrative*, pp. 210-222; Johnson, "Life of Greene," vol. i, pp. 368-387; Graham, "Life of Morgan;" Myers, "Cowpens Papers."



## EFFECT OF THE VICTORY

was that at first only a portion of the American force was used, the rest remaining in reserve and fresh to take advantage of the British mistake of using too many of their force in the beginning, in the hope of carrying everything with a rush.

Cornwallis and his officers never changed their tactics to meet the Morgan method, except to become more desperate in their bayonet charges. They were neither tacticians nor strategists. They had none of General Howe's skill at flanking movements by which he twice defeated Washington. They appear to have known nothing but a direct front attack, and they usually made it with such a narrow column that its flanks could be enveloped.

The Battle of the Cowpens was a magnificent victory for Morgan. For Cornwallis it was an inexcusable disgrace. Three months before he had allowed Ferguson to isolate himself with a weak detachment, which had been lost; and now he had again made the same mistake, although he had had abundance of troops with which to make Tarleton's detachment strong enough to accomplish its purpose.

The effect on the patriot party of Morgan's victory was most reviving and stimulating; and the news of it arrived only a few weeks after a most depressing incident which at first bore the appearance of a disbanding of Washington's army. His troops, ragged and starved, and living from hand to mouth, had not been paid, even in depreciated Continental money, for a year. The time of those who, after the Battle of Saratoga, had enlisted "for three years or during the war," had expired. "Three years or the war" had meant that if the war closed, as was expected, before the three years were out, the men should be discharged. When the war continued for more than three years the officers gave a new meaning to the words "for the war," and the men had unwillingly submitted to this construction. But now they insisted on their discharge and their money.

"On the 1st of January, 1781, thirteen hundred of the "Pennsylvania Line," as Wayne's hard drinking Scotch Irishmen

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

were called, marched from Morristown for Philadelphia under command of three sergeants, with the intention of forcing the Congress to pay them. Such a disorderly event caused much ridicule among loyalists and British, and seemed to show that the end was near. But the mutineers rejected British offers to receive them and turned over to the hangman the British emissaries. By the greatest exertions of leading patriots, who met them at Princeton, the mutineers were quieted and prevented from reaching Philadelphia; but this was done by yielding to all their demands for discharge and pay. Another small detachment that threatened mutiny was subdued by force and by the shooting of two of the ringleaders. But Washington's whole army seemed on the eve of dissolution.<sup>6</sup>

Morgan, although he had defeated Tarleton, was still in a dangerous position. He had risked a great deal in stopping to fight. His force was still an isolated detachment, and Cornwallis, with a superior force, was not far away, intending to cut off his retreat.

Morgan, however, lost no time. He crossed the Broad River on the afternoon of the battle, and early the next morning started northeastward to reach the Catawba as quickly as possible and put it between himself and Cornwallis. But compelled to collect his food from the country, with roads deep in mud, streams swollen by the rains, and tired troops, he could make only ten miles a day.

It has usually been supposed that Cornwallis now had an opportunity of annihilating him; but he lost it by delay. He waited to be joined by Leslie and he waited to collect the remains of Tarleton's scattered command; and then, supposing that Morgan would remain near the scene of his recent exploit, or move down on Ninety-Six, he began to look for him in that

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<sup>6</sup> Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. ix, pp. 87-98, 100-102, 117-119, 121-123; "Life of Joseph Reed," by W. B. Reed, vol. ii, p. 325; Bolton, "Private Soldier under Washington," pp. 65, 67, 70; *Magazine of American History*, vol. x, p. 331; Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iv, pp. 16-22; J. J. Boudinot, "Life of Boudinot," vol. i, p. 207; Stillé, "Life of Wayne," pp. 239-262; Lee, *Memoirs*, vol. ii, p. 203.

## MADNESS OF CORNWALLIS

direction. He lost valuable time hunting in the west for an enemy that was all the time travelling northeast. When finally he turned in the right direction, and reached the Catawba, he found that Morgan had crossed it two days ahead of him and was safe from pursuit. A large portion of his militia, whose time had expired, were leaving him and scattering to their homes.

Cornwallis had been outgeneralled and surely it was now the best policy for him to obey Clinton's orders, make sure of the safety of South Carolina and Georgia and abandon the invasion of North Carolina as he had done when Ferguson had been cut off. After such heavy losses as the disaster to Ferguson and the disaster to Tarleton, it was not a time for taking still greater risks. But whom the gods intend to destroy they first make mad; and maddened by an extravagant desire to push northward into Virginia, inflated by his lucky victory over Gates the year before, encouraged by the confidence of the Ministry and his contempt for Clinton's defensive methods, he actually decided to follow on after Morgan and make a tour of conquest through North Carolina into Virginia.

His avowed theory of action was that Clinton's absurd defensive measures must cease. Nothing could ever be accomplished by them. The British empire in America could be saved only by active aggression; and this aggressiveness must not be checked by a mere incidental disaster like that which had just befallen Tarleton at the Cowpens.

"The unfortunate affair of the 17th of January," he writes to the Ministry, "was a very unexpected and severe blow; for besides reputation our loss did not fall short of 600 men; however, being thoroughly sensible that defensive measures would be certain ruin to the affairs of Britain in the southern colonies, this event did not deter me from prosecuting the original plan." (B. F. Stevens, "Clinton-Cornwallis Controversy," vol. ii, pp. 355, 356.)

In the controversy over his conduct several years afterwards he gave in more detail his reasons for attempting a second time an undertaking in which he had once already so lamentably failed.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

"I was principally induced to decide in favor of its expediency from a clear conviction that the men and treasures of Britain would be lavished in vain upon the American war without the most active exertions of the troops allotted for that service; and that while the enemy could draw their supplies from North Carolina and Virginia, the defence of the frontier of South Carolina, even against an inferior army, would be from its extent, the nature of the climate, and the disposition of the inhabitants, utterly impracticable. The many untoward circumstances, which occurred during the four months succeeding the complete victory of Camden, had entirely confirmed me in this opinion. Our hopes of success in offensive operations, were not founded only upon the efforts of the corps under my immediate command, which did not much exceed three thousand men; but principally upon the most positive assurances, given by apparently credible deputies and emissaries, that upon the appearance of a British army in North Carolina, a great body of the inhabitants were ready to join and co-operate with it in endeavoring to restore his Majesty's government." (B. F. Stevens, "Clinton-Cornwallis Controversy," vol. i, p. 65; see also pp. 237, 238.)

It will be observed that he says that he relied for success, not alone upon his army, "but principally upon the most positive assurances" that there would be an uprising of loyalists to assist him. How he could rely on such assurances after his recent experience, when he and Ferguson invaded North Carolina, is difficult to understand.

If, as he says, the South Carolina frontier could not be defended under present conditions, how could he hope to maintain his force of only 3000 up in North Carolina, farther from his base of supplies than when he had them down in South Carolina? And if he took those 3000 up into North Carolina, was he not rendering the garrisons in South Carolina still weaker and giving the patriots a chance to attack them in his rear and cut his communications?

But all these difficulties he seems to have thought would be obviated by that great uprising of loyalists on which he "principally" relied. His aide-de-camp, Captain Ross, had recently returned from a visit to the Ministry in England, and brought, Clinton says, the messages and encouragement which started his Lordship on this mad career of northern conquest. About this time, strange to say, the old outer fortifi-

## BURNS HIS BAGGAGE

cations of Charleston were levelled and he was thus leaving South Carolina more defenceless than ever.

He was so full of blind confidence and so carried away by his ambition, that he ordered all the heavy and superfluous baggage of the army to be collected in one place and burnt, and he encouraged the sacrifice by burning his own. Thus lightly equipped for the heavy task before him, he started northward through the centre of that state which had so long been the object of his ambition. It was an expedition which, as Clinton said, lost England the American continent.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> B. F. Stevens, "Clinton-Cornwallis Controversy," vol. i, pp. 312 note, 313 note, 321 note, 34 note, 44 note, 61 note, 64 note, 102 note, 106, 250 note, 484; Clinton, "Observations on Stedman's American War," p. 23.



## XCII.

### THE DASH ACROSS NORTH CAROLINA

ABOUT a week after its occurrence Greene heard the joyful news of the Battle of Cowpens. Although delighted beyond measure, he seems to have thought the situation very serious, that he could no longer remain where he was, that Morgan would be pursued, and that there must be a race northward to save him.

He prepared his army for marching; he sent word to his commissaries at Salisbury and Hillsboro to remove their stores into Virginia; he directed the quartermaster-general to have boats in readiness at the Dan River on the borders of that state so that if necessary his army might pass quickly over; and he urged the patriot governors of North Carolina and Virginia to hasten the recruits. Then putting his army in command of Major-General Huger, with instructions to proceed as fast as possible to Salisbury, he took an aide with a guard of cavalry and hurried to join Morgan's division.

It was a ride of one hundred and fifty miles through a loyalist country; a heavy rain was falling and the streams were flooded; but "the birds are singing," he wrote to his wife, "and the frogs are peeping in the same manner they are in April to the northward." When he reached Morgan he found that that hero intended to escape with his army to the western mountains, a method which would undoubtedly be the surest way to save his own force and keep control of his prisoners; but it was hardly compatible with Greene's plan of uniting the two patriot divisions and falling back on his base in Virginia. The western escape was promptly forbidden, and when Morgan, somewhat nettled, said that he would then be no longer responsible for consequences, Greene replied, "neither shall you, for the measure is my own."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Lee, *Memoirs*, vol. i, p. 392.

## CROSSING THE CATAWBA

Greene's whole purpose was now concentrated on having Cornwallis pursue both patriot divisions across North Carolina into Virginia. He was delighted when he heard that Cornwallis, having abandoned his baggage, was pushing northward, and he exclaimed, with an excited gesture, "Then he is ours."

He had some thoughts of using Morgan's whole force to dispute with Cornwallis the passage of the Catawba while it was in high flood. But the rain ceased and the river fell so fast that this plan was abandoned. Morgan was ordered to press on northward towards Virginia, while Greene lingered in the rear encouraging the militia of the country to move back to the Catawba and dispute its passage as much as possible.

Meantime Cornwallis was on the other side of the Catawba waiting for its swollen waters to fall, and on the night of the first of February he determined to force a passage at McGowan's Ford, for it was again raining and the ford would soon be impassable. The water at the ford had fallen to three or four feet in depth, but was 500 yards wide and rushing down with an impetuous torrent. Before starting he destroyed more of his baggage and determined on a hot pursuit.

The crossing of this strange American river in the dim light before dawn, with its yellow torrent drowning all other sounds, and patriot militia guarding the opposite shore, was always regarded by the English as one of the great and romantic feats of the war. 'All went well till they reached the middle of the stream, when the lights from the watch fires on the other bank shone upon them and the militia under Davidson began to fire. Wounded horses reared and plunged, and were swept down by the stream with dead and wounded men. O'Hara's horse rolled over with him in the water. Cornwallis's horse was shot, but carried the general to the shore and then fell dead under him. The guides who were showing the British the shoalest places fled. This was fortunate, because the guides would have followed the ford which led to where three hundred militia were prepared to renew memories of Bunker Hill on a British enemy waist deep in water. Without their guides the English went straight to the nearest bank, and forming

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

in battle order, a sharp contest followed, in which the militia were driven off and Davidson killed.<sup>2</sup>

The next day Tarleton followed on the track of three hundred of the militia and tried to dash into them at noon while they were at dinner. But his method, once so effective, had grown stale. The militia were watching for him. When he arrived and charged with the cry, "Remember the Cowpens," they were all in their saddles, gave a volley, and retreated.

The next great yellow river to the north and east was the Yadkin, towards which Greene and Morgan were pressing, followed by swarms of the inhabitants of the country with their household goods in wagons and on pack horses, hurrying to keep out of the way of the mighty invader who was now straining every nerve to force the whole patriot throng against the river and destroy them. It was a close race, for the great mass moved slowly. But Greene had sent men ahead to collect boats at the ford. On the evening of the 3rd of February the whole patriot throng, except the rear guard and three wagons, had crossed the river at the Trading Ford, east of Salisbury, just as the British advance arrived, when the guard abandoned the wagons and escaped. The British did not attempt to cross at that ford with the water deep, no boats, and the enemy on the opposite bank; but, as Tarleton tells us, they went far to the northward and crossed by the Shallow Ford, which brought them into the region of the old Moravian towns and their fertile fields.<sup>3</sup>

Greene's crossing of the Yadkin was considered very lucky with the British so close behind, for an accidental delay of an hour might have precipitated a patriot disaster. It shows how much Greene had risked in isolating his two detachments, and

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<sup>2</sup> Lee, *Memoirs*, vol. i, p. 209; Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iv, p. 39; Stedman, "American War," edition 1794, vol. ii, p. 328; Tarleton, *Narrative*, pp. 224-226, 262; G. W. Greene, "Life of General Greene," vol. iii, p. 155; B. F. Stevens, "Clinton-Cornwallis Controversy," vol. i, p. 357; Johnson, "Life of Greene," vol. i, p. 416.

<sup>3</sup> Tarleton, *Narrative*, pp. 227, 228.

## THE REGION AND PEOPLE

that it might still require the utmost exertion of American and partisan alertness to save Morgan's division.

It was midwinter, which in that region is a period of occasional heavy rains, sometimes mingled with snow or sleet. But there are many days of moderate temperature, delicious invigorating air and bright sunshine which sets all the pine trees glistening. It is delightful weather for an outing, and the same climate which now attracts so many northern sportsmen who tramp through the sticky red mud and watch the illusive coveys of quail fly across the great yellow rivers which were such problems to Greene and Cornwallis.

The next river was the Dan, on the borders of Virginia, and if both the patriot divisions escaped across it the whole plan of Cornwallis for the conquest of North Carolina would fail. The whole object of his mad chase northward was to come up with at least one of the divisions and destroy it. If he failed in this, and the divisions remained intact, they might return and attack any garrisons he left to hold the state. He could not conquer North Carolina merely by making a trip across it; it could be conquered only by destroying Greene's army, and then encouraging and arming the loyalists in such numbers that they would be able to assume political control.<sup>4</sup>

North Carolina was at that time largely in a semi-wilderness condition. The whole population of the state was not more than 200,000, including negroes; and all these people were spread over vast spaces. Charlotte, Salisbury and Hillsboro, which were the towns of the region Cornwallis was invading, were mere frontier villages, no one of them able to boast of a hundred houses; and the population of the state was largely composed of Germans, Swiss, Scotch, Scotch-Irish, Dutch and French, mixed with English settlers.<sup>5</sup>

There was a certain number of very devoted patriots, as the Mecklenburg Resolutions of 1775 abundantly prove. But a large part of the population being of mixed nationality, and

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<sup>4</sup> B. F. Stevens, "Clinton-Cornwallis Controversy," vol. ii, p. 121.

<sup>5</sup> G. W. Greene, "Life of General Greene," vol. iii, p. 10.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

recently from Europe, felt no strong interest in the state, and while often classed as loyalists, cared little for either side. This characteristic of the people, together with their wide dispersion, made it a difficult state to conquer and occupy; for the vast distances were more dangerous than the inhabitants and equivalent to a second patriot army.

Thus far Cornwallis had failed to take advantage of Greene's division of the patriot force into two isolated detachments. The divisions had been too fleet for him. The more he pursued them the closer he drove them to their base of supplies, while he was lengthening his own line of communications and moving farther from his base. The two divisions were now marching almost parallel, would soon join, and then might be better able to protect themselves.

Cornwallis, by crossing at the Shallow Ford of the Yadkin, was now considerably to the westward of Greene's two divisions and parallel with them; and he believed that he could force them to fight. He had, as he thought, reliable information that Greene could not obtain boats enough to cross a river like the Dan, which was very deep in its lower course near where Greene was; and Cornwallis accordingly took his Majesty's army towards the upper and easier fords of the Dan, so as to force Greene down to the deeper ones.

This was another mistake and suited Greene exactly. "From Cornwallis's pressing disposition," he said, "and the contempt he has for our army we may precipitate him into some capital misfortune."<sup>a</sup> Feeling sure of his ability to cross the Dan at any point, Greene now arranged for his two divisions to meet at Guilford Court House, which lies west of Hillsboro, near the Alamance; and there on the 9th of February the two isolated detachments became one.

Strengthened by this junction Greene decided to wait for Cornwallis to attack him and settle the control of North Carolina. A stout patriot defence and safe retreat, or even a

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<sup>a</sup> Lee, *Memoirs*, vol. i, p. 273; G. W. Greene, "Life of General Greene," vol. iii, p. 162.



## GREENE AVOIDS BATTLE

drawn battle, with Cornwallis so far from his base, would cripple him enough to force his retreat back to South Carolina, while the patriot army being now close to its base and refuge in Virginia, had all the advantage of the situation.

But, after choosing and studying the ground, Greene found that the reinforcements he expected from Virginia had been unable to leave that state because it was invaded by a British force. This force was a detachment in command of the traitor Arnold, who had been sent to Virginia by Clinton under the instructions of the Ministry to support Cornwallis in his plan of conquering North Carolina. Greene's whole army after the junction of the two divisions contained barely 2000 men, one-quarter of them militia, all dispirited and fatigued, and some unfit for duty. There would be too much risk in trying for even a drawn battle against the 2500 or 3000 regulars under Cornwallis. So Greene started for the Dan, seventy miles away, through a red clay region of miry roads, rendered almost impassable by the February rains.

The delay caused by studying the battlefield at Guilford had brought Cornwallis nearer, and retreat was by no means so easy for Greene as it had been a few days before. In fact, it was extremely dangerous, and might easily end in a disaster which would possibly justify the British general's disobedience of orders and his wild chase far from his base of supplies. Greene was laboring under all the disadvantages of flying from a superior force which was close behind him without baggage and eager in pursuit. That race through seventy miles of rain and mud to the Dan River would evidently be a terrible one, which would test the mettle of both generals, and Greene had made careful preparations.

He had sent away his heavy baggage. He had ordered boats to be collected at Boyd's Ferry on the Dan, and he had sent word to the partisan leaders, Marion, Sumter, and Pickens, to raid in the rear of Cornwallis. To check the pursuit and gain time for the main body of the patriot army Greene placed in its rear seven hundred picked men, cavalry, light infantry and riflemen under the command of Otho Williams, with orders

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

to stay in front of Cornwallis and, by continuous and cautious fighting and disputing every inch of ground, delay the British progress sufficiently to allow the patriot army to cross the Dan.

The command of this rear guard, on which the fate of the whole army depended, would naturally have fallen to Morgan. It was offered to him, and when he declined he was again urged to accept it by the personal efforts of Light Horse Lee. But he persisted in his refusal, giving as his reason, that he was suffering greatly from rheumatism and ague and intended to retire from the army. Lee intimates that his excuse was not considered sufficient, and that his going off at this critical period was generally regarded as rather unpatriotic. He is supposed to have been nettled at the rejection of his plan of escape by the western mountains, or had no faith in Greene's audacious plan of decoying Cornwallis up to Virginia, or possibly he did not relish becoming a mere subordinate after winning on his own responsibility what he knew was one of the greatest victories of the war. Well deserved promotion had until recently been denied him, and there was evidently some opposition to him in the Congress if not in the army.

But the suspicions of his motives seem to have been unfounded. He retired because he had become incapacitated by rheumatism and ague. His wonderful victory, rough origin and lack of education naturally aroused jealousy and carping criticism. That one of the most important battles of the war should have been won contrary to military rules, and by the rheumatic old wagoner of the Alleghanies, was to a certain class of minds a very painful circumstance. The Cowpens ended his military career in the Revolution. He retired to his Virginia home, where he became prosperous in farming, and after the war was elected a member of the Congress.

Williams was by no means inadequate to the command of the rear guard. His first appearance in front of Cornwallis was eminently successful, and caused a delay while the British officers reconnoitred to learn the numbers and probable intention of their enemy. Then they pressed on driving Williams slowly before them, while Greene with the rest of the army

## THE RACE FOR THE DAN

hurried toward the ford. Williams gained another delay by leading Cornwallis somewhat aside from the course followed by Greene. But this could not be kept up or the British might have slipped in between Williams and Greene.

At night both sides halted, but half of Williams's force kept watch while the other half slept for six hours. The utmost watchfulness was necessary to prevent Cornwallis passing ahead of the rear guard and cutting it off. At three o'clock in the morning Williams's men were again in motion, and those who had been guarding would sleep the following night. Thus there was six hours sleep in forty-eight during this three days' struggle to reach the Dan. The Americans of both divisions had only their clothes or rags for covering; no tents and only one blanket to every three men. They were drenched with the continual rains which at times turned to snow, and hundreds of them were barefooted and tracking the ground with blood, as in the winter campaigns in New Jersey and Pennsylvania. But there could be no rest, for on this struggle the result of the Revolution seemed to depend.

The North Carolina militia lost heart, and on the third day all but eighty had deserted and scattered to their homes. Williams had stopped fighting the British advance; for he found it only a waste of strength. He merely kept on ahead of them while they followed him at an even pace. Their advance under O'Hara was often within musket shot of his rear under Lee, neither side firing, but husbanding all their efforts for the march. Thus the three separate bodies under Greene, Williams and Cornwallis, all greatly fatigued, kept following one another, utterly unable to change their relative positions in the exhausting race.

On the evening of the third day Cornwallis kept up the pursuit long after dark, and then after a short halt took it up again at midnight, driving in Williams's videttes and compelling his weary men to rouse from their beds of mud and stumble on through the darkness. They were nearing the river and Cornwallis was making a final effort to exhaust the endurance of the rear guard.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

The next morning he was still driving them, both sides stopping, as if by agreement, for an hour to eat breakfast. Then up again and on for the rest of the day; but at noon Williams's men began cheering. A messenger had reached them to say that Greene's division had crossed the Dan at Boyd's Ford the day before.

But there was no pause in the hot pursuit of Cornwallis. Even when night came, he drove Williams through the darkness straight to the river, where Greene's preparations were so complete that the force of Williams was all across when the British reached the shore.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> G. W. Greene, "Life of General Greene," vol. iii, chap. x; Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iv, pp. 43-46; Lee, *Memoirs*, vol. i, pp. 272-298; Johnson, "Life of Greene," vol. i, pp. 408-413.

## XCIII.

### GREENE STOPS THE RISING OF THE LOYALISTS

GREENE's escape across the Dan, though not conspicuous and popular like a battle, was regarded as one of the most important events of the Revolution. Greene had delayed so long to study the field at Guilford that he was within an ace of destruction; and if his army had been broken up the best that could be expected for the patriot cause would have been that the Carolinas, Georgia and Florida would remain provinces of the British empire, with Virginia as the frontier of the independent northern states. The lower half of Virginia as far up as the James, and possibly as far up as the Potomac, would, in Lee's opinion, soon have surrendered or voluntarily asked for annexation to England.

This was no fanciful anxiety, for with France unable to assist us, there was already a party in the Congress that favored abandoning the South. Greene had been sent to the Carolinas as the last experiment, the last forlorn hope, and if he failed the hopelessness of another attempt would have seemed so evident that the Congress would probably have confined all its energies to saving the North.

But now Greene's soldiers, safe across the Dan, relieved from their terrible fatigue and conscious of their success, spent several days in rest and rejoicing, interspersing the time with endless anecdotes of their eventful race. As for Cornwallis, it was impossible to deny that he had driven Greene out of North Carolina. But he could not follow him into Virginia with any prospect of coming up with him; and Arnold with a British force at Norfolk was too far away to assist such a pursuit.

Cornwallis, therefore, turned to that plan he always had in mind and tried to arouse the loyalists of North Carolina by announcing his conquest of their province. He had driven out



## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

the enemy, therefore all loyal subjects of the King should rejoice. Marching his army to Hillsboro, he erected there with due formality, on the 23d of February, the royal standard, and issued a proclamation calling for that great loyalist army on which he placed all his hopes and with which he intended to conquer Virginia.

He began to meet with considerable success, and received in one day offers of seven independent companies. Greene was filled with the greatest anxiety. The people, he said, were flocking to Cornwallis for protection and to enlist, and something must be done to stop this rising tide of loyalism, or the British army would soon be increased by several thousand fighting men. Greene accordingly ordered Pickens and Harry Lee to return with their light troops into North Carolina to terrify the loyalists; and a day or two afterwards the main body of the patriot army followed, and held itself ready to retreat westward, while Lee and Pickens began to raid close about the army of Cornwallis.

While trying to surprise Tarleton, who was encouraging and protecting loyalist recruits, Lee suddenly came upon a body of three hundred loyalists just recruited by a Colonel Pyle, who, not recognizing Lee's men, allowed them to draw up beside him on the road. Lee intended to watch a favorable moment and then quietly demand their surrender; but as he was on the point of grasping Pyle's hand for the purpose, his men were recognized and the loyalists began to fire. The contest, however, was very brief with troopers like those of Lee. In a few moments ninety of the loyalists were dead and nearly all the rest wounded in a struggle which the British described as a massacre and prisoner killing.<sup>1</sup>

Lee defended the conduct of his men as necessary to their

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<sup>1</sup>Lee, *Memoirs*, vol. i, pp. 302-312; Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iv, p. 48; G. W. Greene, "Life of General Greene," vol. iii, pp. 182, 183 and note; B. F. Stevens, "Clinton-Cornwallis Controversy," vol. i, pp. 327, 360; W. B. Reed, "Life of Joseph Reed," vol. ii, p. 34; Tarleton, *Narrative*, pp. 230-233, 265; Johnson, "Life of Greene," vol. i, p. 453.

## FLUCTUATING LOYALISTS

own preservation. But whatever it was, we can readily understand that its effect on loyalist recruiting was very discouraging. The rising tide of loyalism slackened and fell away; and from this we learn something of the nature of loyalism in North Carolina.

The so-called loyalists were not those devoted subjects of his Majesty, filled with the "dutiful obedience" of which so much has been heard, but that mixed population of varied nationality, recently from Europe. They probably bore little or no resemblance to the homogeneous, acclimated, native stock which we now find in the South and which seem incapable of the conduct of the so-called loyalists of the Revolution. They were shifting their ground every day with change of circumstances, and this probably accounts for the contradictory complaints we find in the letters of Greene and of Cornwallis. One was constantly complaining that there seemed to be scarcely any patriots and the other that there seemed to be scarcely any loyalists.

The weak point in the position of Cornwallis was now developing. He had not destroyed Greene's army; and while that army existed, North Carolina was unconquered. Greene was not stupid enough to repose in Virginia while Cornwallis organized loyalism on the other side of the Dan.

Greene had now received part of the reinforcements he had been expecting, and, though they were mere militiamen, he determined to remain as best he could in North Carolina, in order to keep down loyalism, which recent events showed would rise as soon as there was opportunity. He was more than ever convinced that the majority of the people in the state were loyalists, and that he must scare them from joining the British, or Cornwallis would have such numbers that he could break up the patriot army and hold the country. He felt confident that by skilful manœuvring he could avoid a battle and keep open his communications with Virginia until the rest of his reinforcements arrived.

Cornwallis now abandoned Hillsboro and took a position on the Alamance to encourage the loyalists of that region. Greene

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

was a few miles to the westward somewhat protected by being in the triangle formed by Troublesome Creek and Reedy Fork, which flow into the Little Alamance. To prevent Cornwallis attacking him he exercised again that elaborate watchfulness, which had saved him during the last two months, when he violated the rule of war by dividing his army into two isolated detachments. His army now never passed two successive nights in the same spot, and no one except Greene knew where the next camp would be until they heard the order to halt and bivouac.

He decided everything for himself and held no councils of war. His men had supreme confidence in his capacity for any emergency, and he inspired their enthusiasm by his familiar manner, indifference to hardships and ceaseless vigilance. He would often turn out before dawn and visit every sentinel at his post. A large part of his best and lightest equipped troops, under Otho Williams aided by Lee and Pickens, watched Cornwallis day and night, and kept between the two armies to prevent every chance of a surprise. It was only by this extraordinary care that Greene could keep his position in the presence of a superior and desperate enemy, who was watching eagerly for a mistake.

One morning under cover of a fog, Cornwallis attempted with his whole force to surprise Williams, and reach Greene's main army. But the Marylander was too alert, and, after a sharp action on the Reedy Fork, Cornwallis abandoned the attempt; and two other attempts to reach Greene also failed.

Greene's daily movements within the triangle of the two streams continued for over two weeks to the great alarm of the loyalists, who kept close at home and had lost all their passion for recruiting. Meantime, reinforcements were arriving, and on the 14th of March Greene, with the goodly number of 4400 men, came out of the triangle and took a position at Guilford Court House where a month before he had intended to offer battle.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Lee, *Memoirs*, vol. i, pp. 321-330.

## A BATTLE NECESSARY

A battle was absolutely necessary for both generals. Cornwallis could never persuade the heterogeneous inhabitants of North Carolina to hold the state for the King unless he defeated Greene and proved that he could protect them from the patriots. Greene could never save North Carolina for patriotism unless he defeated Cornwallis; and now was his best chance before his newly arrived militia reinforcements deserted him. The British general, far from his base of supplies, with desertion constantly depleting his troops, was anxious for a battle, and as soon as he saw Greene had chosen a battle-ground, he attacked him the next day.

## XCIV.

### THE BATTLE OF GUILFORD COURT HOUSE

GUILFORD COURT HOUSE was at that time a building standing alone in a clearing, without any village or settlement, and was used for the slight judicial needs of a half wilderness country. The open spaces around it seemed to Greene well suited to his purpose, and in arranging his troops for this battle of the 15th of March he followed Morgan's plan which had won the Battle of the Cowpens. The ground was very similar to the Cowpens, open with a slight slope, and on this rising ground Greene drew up his army, after the manner of Morgan, in three distinct divisions, one behind the other, with the worst militia in the front division.

Morgan had placed his divisions about one hundred and fifty yards apart; but Greene placed his second line three hundred yards behind the first and the third four hundred yards behind the second, offering three successive barriers, very far apart, each of which must be overcome by the British charge before the other could be reached. He is even said to have followed Morgan's plan of telling the front division of militia that after having fired two rounds they could retreat. The cavalry, which Morgan had placed in the rear, Greene placed on the flanks.

He had made, however, a rather unfortunate variation in the Morgan method by placing his divisions so far apart that the front division of militia felt isolated and timid. His second division was composed of militia with guards behind them to shoot down those who should retreat too soon. The third line, composed of the continentals and veterans, under Huger and Williams, would, it was hoped, save the day when the British were exhausted by forcing the first two divisions.

Cornwallis, who was almost as simple and direct in his tactics as Gates, formed his whole army in close array with the



## THE MILITIA GIVE WAY

intention of hurling the mass at the enemy and relying, in true British fashion, upon the bayonet. As his men were such poor marksmen, and opposed to such good ones, and many of the militia had rifles, this bayonet method had certain advantages. The rush that accompanied it certainly had a terrifying effect on the first division, composed of North Carolina militia; for a large part of them broke and fled, throwing away their loaded guns and cartouche boxes and nearly half of them, Greene said, never fired at all.

The militia were certainly a strange arm of the service in the Revolution, sometimes so efficient as at Bennington, Saratoga and the Cowpens, and sometimes so worthless as at Camden and Guilford Court House.

An incident of this attack on the first line is described by a British sergeant, and shows how one side relied on accurate shooting and the other on desperate charging; and also that the part of the first line to which the sergeant was opposed, stood their ground for a time, and aimed true.

"Instantly the movement was made, in excellent order, in a smart run with arms charged; when arrived within forty yards of the enemy's line, it was perceived that this whole force had their weapons presented and resting on a rail fence, the common partitions in America. They were taking aim with nicest precision." (Journal of Sergeant Lamb, p. 361.)

The sergeant's regiment was completely taken aback and halted when they saw that deadly aim; but their officers urged them on, and Colonel Webster led them in person. They rushed upon the rail fence, but with terrible havoc in their ranks when the Americans touched the triggers.

The whole British force was now dashing upon the second division with loud cheers; but they quickly found themselves attacked on both flanks by the cavalry under Lee and Washington, which Greene had placed on his own flanks for this purpose. The too simple arrangement of Cornwallis now became apparent, for he had no flankers of his own, and he had to halt his whole force and face round several regiments to protect himself from this unexpected flank attack.

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Slowly he drove back the cavalry, who still kept firing until they joined the second militia division, composed largely of Virginians. This division did not flinch, but loaded and fired with absolute steadiness; and the British lost heavily before their bayonet method could force back the right of the Americans.

Cornwallis was now in a bad position. His whole infantry force was in action; he had no reserves; and his whole force, besides its losses, was more or less disunited by having had to face so often in different directions. Having bent the second division round until it was almost at right angles with the third, his own left which had done this work came close to the third division of veteran continentals, who fired and charged giving the British left such an experience of the American bayonet that they were completely routed.

It has been supposed that heavy charging by the American infantry and cavalry at this moment might have defeated the whole British army. But Greene, finding the battle going against him rather more than he expected, was unwilling to risk his reserves and last line in a charge. Cornwallis very soon succeeded in forcing back the rest of the second division, and was then able to unite all his forces and carry out his theory of the fight, which was to hurl a solid mass upon the Americans. When this solid mass reached the American third division, a raw Maryland regiment gave way, endangering the whole division. But that weak regiment was quickly replaced by another, the continentals charged and were assisted by a brilliant dash of Washington's cavalry.

This completely changed the tide of the battle. The British were staggered and fell back so far that Cornwallis, believing a disaster impending, ordered some field pieces to fire into the combat, although, as he admitted, they were as likely to kill as many of his own men as of the enemy. "It is a necessary evil," he said, "which we must endure to avert impending destruction." He stopped in this way, it is said, the American pursuit, but with terrible loss among his own men.

Greene had hoped to wipe out the army of Cornwallis in

## COURAGE OF THE ENGLISH

this Battle of Guilford Court House; but it is a commonplace of military history that a general seldom accomplishes a purpose exactly as he plans it. Greene now saw very clearly that the chances had turned against him, and that he could not win an out and out victory. He therefore decided to retire; for the British were coming on again with more method in their madness, and trying to envelop both his flanks. His men were still perfectly capable of making an orderly retreat, and they immediately did so, fighting as they fell back towards the Reedy Fork, and retiring into the protecting triangle formed by that stream and Troublesome Creek.

As his army marched along that night to reach their favorite retreat, the American and English wounded lay together on the battlefield, their screams and groans mingling with the rain which poured down on the scene of the most hotly contested action of the Revolution.

In no battle of the war did the English soldiers fight so well. Their repeated and desperate charges in the face of American marksmanship must be recorded to their credit. Their heroism and determination, says Stedman, excelled anything that was done on the famous fields of Crecy, of Poitiers, and of Agincourt. It is evident that Greene was surprised at their persistence and had expected to have easier work with them. A possible explanation of the unusual energy of the English lies in the reflection that for several months they had been marching and bivouacking in the open air without tents or baggage, leading, in short, the American life of hunters and frontiersmen, until they somewhat resembled that class of our people. They had become, in a sense, picked men and rather superior to the ordinary British regulars recruited in the slums of London. If, says Stedman, Cornwallis had had the troops Tarleton lost at the Cowpens, "it is not extravagant to suppose that the American colonies might have been reunited to the empire of Great Britain."

As for Cornwallis, it must be admitted, that he fought the battle skilfully according to his theory. Whatever may have been his deficiencies in other respects, he was generally admitted

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

to have been an excellent officer in a simple front to front action in the field. Lee gives him the highest praise. As the British were such bad marksmen, and Cornwallis had none of Howe's ability at tactics, manœuvres and flanking, the hurling of a solid mass of bayonets at his enemy was probably the best he could do, and he did it well and courageously.

If we can believe his own account his victory was a still more remarkable one than his triumph over Gates at Camden. In his letter to the Ministry and in a letter to Clinton, he said that the Americans numbered over 7000 men and that he beat them with only 1560 British. If this proportion is true and he really defeated an American army more than four times larger than his own, he certainly deserves to stand high in military annals.

As to the American numbers, Gordon, who knew Greene, had access to his papers and talked with him and his officers about the battle, places the American numbers at 4443. Greene's grandson, who had access to his ancestor's papers and made a careful investigation, gives the number as 4404 and Lee makes it 4449.

Lamb says that a letter found in the pocket of an American sergeant killed in the battle gave 7000 as the number of the army. But such a statement is by no means conclusive, and even if such a letter was found it may have referred to numbers some days before the battle. Greene wrote in two different letters that a few weeks before there had been with him a body of about 5000 militia, but that five days before the battle their numbers had sunk to only eight or nine hundred.

As for Cornwallis's statement that he had won with only 1560 British in action, and one regiment and a hundred infantry out of action guarding his baggage, it seems very extraordinary when we consider the number of troops he started with from South Carolina. We are inclined to adopt the opinion of Clinton, who, when he heard of this wonder, informed Cornwallis in courteous but plain language, that he did not believe it. He reminded his Lordship, that, by his Lordship's own returns, he had had some 3000 men, without

## NUMBERS IN THE BATTLE

counting cavalry, when he set out to pursue Morgan after the Battle of the Cowpens. That he should have lost half of this force in his race across North Carolina in which no pitched battles were fought, seems hardly possible. Lee estimated the whole force of Cornwallis at 2400, of which he believed 2000 were in the action at Guilford. The American force of 4400 therefore outnumbered Cornwallis almost two to one. But only 1490 of the Americans were veteran troops. The rest were militia; and some of them were the worst militia in the United States; so that Greene's advantage in numbers was not so great as might at first be supposed.

Soon after the battle Greene's army was much reduced. Some eight or nine hundred of his militia departed after their fashion and scattered to their homes; and he had lost about 327 in killed, wounded and missing. But although he modestly described himself as "having blundered through without any capital misfortune" he had done enough. Cornwallis had lost six hundred killed and wounded. Some of his best officers, Stuart, O'Hara, Robinson, Talbot, and Grant, were killed; and there was an unusually large number of wounded officers.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> B. F. Stevens, "Clinton-Cornwallis Controversy," vol. i, pp. 363, 364, 367, 390, 442; Johnson, "Life of Greene," vol. ii, pp. 1-26; Tarleton, Narrative, pp. 270-279; Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iv, p. 54; Lee, Memoirs, vol. i, pp. 339-358; Stedman, "American War," vol. ii, p. 346; G. W. Greene, "Life of General Greene," vol. iii, pp. 190, 204, 205, 207; Sergeant Lamb's Journal, pp. 355, 356.



## XCV.

### CORNWALLIS RETREATS TO WILMINGTON AND ABANDONS SOUTH CAROLINA

CORNWALLIS had lost in battle nearly a third of his army; and such a loss destroyed all his chances of holding North Carolina by encouraging a general rising of the loyalists. He describes the loyalists coming into his camp, shaking hands with him and congratulating him on his victory. But he admits that he could not persuade so much as a hundred of them to join him or stir a hand to help him. They were polite and friendly; but they saw clearly that he was ruined and could do nothing to protect them from the patriots.

The safety of the remains of his army was now a serious question. But, first, he went through the form of proclaiming his victory, which he described in an enthusiastic letter to the Ministry; and he again called on the loyalists to join him. Immediately after this bombastic display, and three days after the battle, he left the worst of his wounded to the care of the patriots and began retiring in a southeasterly direction along the Cape Fear River, on the head waters of which the battle had been fought.

He expected provisions and recruits at the loyalist Scotch settlement at Cross Creek; but was disappointed in both. Greene followed him hoping to force another battle, but the militia kept deserting in such numbers that he could do Cornwallis no harm. We gain a glimpse of the destitution in the patriot army when we learn that, on reaching one of the abandoned camps of the British, our men ate the beef that had been left hanging in the slaughter pens and then greedily devoured the garbage that had been thrown out to the vultures.

In his report to the Ministry, Cornwallis described his retreat as merely a leisurely approach to the sea to "procure

## RETREAT TO WILMINGTON

the necessary supplies for future operations." But in reality he was running away from Greene and abandoning North Carolina and its loyalists. One would have supposed that he would retreat to Camden, in South Carolina, as he had done in the autumn when the first trial of his plan had failed. It surely was important to protect the garrisons in South Carolina; for he had himself said that it was extremely doubtful whether they could hold out against the patriot army.

At one point on his retreat along the Cape Fear River he was within sixty miles of Camden; but instead of turning aside towards that town he kept on down the river to Wilmington, 90 miles away. Before he set out on his pursuit of Morgan he had given directions that Wilmington should be occupied by a force from Charleston, and the town had recently been taken by a British officer, Major Craig. It was the only seaport of North Carolina and Cornwallis had intended to use it as his base of supplies from England for the subjugation of the state. But as his chances of holding North Carolina were completely wrecked, and South Carolina was so weak, it seemed contrary to common sense not to go at once where assistance was most needed; and he never was able to give a satisfactory reason for going to Wilmington.<sup>1</sup>

"My intention then was, as soon as I should have equipped my own corps, and received a part of the expected reinforcement from Ireland, to return to the upper country; in hopes of giving some protection to South Carolina, and of preserving the health of the troops until new measures could be concerted with the Commander in Chief." (B. F. Stevens, "Clinton-Cornwallis Controversy," vol. i, p. 67.)

But why not equip his corps and wait for reinforcements in South Carolina where his troops might have been of some

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<sup>1</sup> Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iv, pp. 47, 57-59; B. F. Stevens, "Clinton-Cornwallis Controversy," vol. i, pp. 67, 80 note, 363-370, 396; G. W. Greene, "Life of General Greene," vol. iii, p. 212; Tarleton, Narrative, pp. 281, 283, 284; Clinton's "Observations on Stedman's American War," p. 17; Stedman, "American War," vol. ii, p. 351.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

use in protecting the British interest in that state? Having failed to conquer North Carolina how could he in his weak state conquer Virginia; and while he lingered at Wilmington would not Greene invade South Carolina now left unprotected?

As soon as it was evident that Cornwallis was retreating along the Cape Fear River to enter Wilmington, a discussion arose among Greene and his officers as to the British general's ultimate intentions. Would he finally go to the protection of South Carolina or would he attempt to carry out his grand plan of invading Virginia where the British forces under Phillips and Arnold were already at work? Meantime, what should Greene's little army do? Should it wait conveniently near Wilmington prepared to act according to circumstances and to the course Cornwallis should take; and how near Wilmington should it remain?

At first the general opinion was in favor of remaining near Cornwallis. Lee is supposed to have suggested that instead of that the main patriot army should instantly march into South Carolina and attack Camden, while Lee's light troops should join themselves to Marion and cut the British communications between Camden and Charleston. The animated debate over this suggestion is described by Lee with his usual relish for military argument.<sup>2</sup> Some of the officers clung to the idea that was deluding Cornwallis, namely, that Virginia was the key to the South, that if that state were taken by the British the Carolinas and Georgia would submit as a matter of course, and therefore Greene should stay near Cornwallis to prevent his entering Virginia.

It was true that Virginia was an important part of the South. She was the richest and most populous province, her public men were able and conspicuous and the arms, ammu-

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<sup>2</sup>Lee, *Memoirs*, vol. ii, p. 31. Lee does not distinctly say that he suggested the southward move, but he implies that he suggested it. Johnson in his "Life of Greene," vol. ii, pp. 33, 423, shows rather conclusively that it had been in Greene's mind long before.

## GREENE GOES SOUTH

nition and reinforcements for the patriots in the Carolinas must come from Virginia or pass through her territory from farther north. If she were conquered one might suppose the patriots in the Carolinas and Georgia saying, Why should we hold out any longer, how can we obtain reinforcements, ammunition and arms with Virginia in the hands of the enemy?

But the best way of protecting Virginia was not necessarily by going directly to her aid and leaving South Carolina in the hands of the British to be used by them as a base for perpetual attacks upon Virginia. The surer way was to attack South Carolina, now so weakly defended; for in that case Cornwallis would be compelled to rush to its protection and abandon his designs on both Virginia and North Carolina; or if he tried to conquer Virginia he would lose South Carolina and Georgia, as well as North Carolina.

Against this it was urged that Cornwallis would not be so bad a general as to go to Virginia. He would more likely follow the patriots to South Carolina, and might he not be again able to drive them out, and again chase them across North Carolina?

No, replied Lee, he will not be strong enough to do that again. If he follows us he can do no more than protect South Carolina. We shall have inflicted great damage on the British forces there, before he can reach us; and if with his steadily diminishing forces he should attempt another chase across North Carolina, and another Guilford Court House, it will surely be his ruin.

Greene had no doubt long had in mind the superior advantage of a descent into South Carolina. But he listened with his usual patience to all the arguments; and then promptly decided on the bold dash southward which was by no means without its dangers and hardships. He would be removing himself far from his source of ammunition and recruits in the North, and an enterprising British general might cut his communications and isolate him beyond hope of retreat. Realizing that it was a desperate raid, which would require reliable and quick moving troops, he dismissed the remains of his militia,

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE \*

and started on the 6th of April with only 900 veterans in haste to reach the British posts before Cornwallis could pass round by sea to protect them. He need not have been in such a hurry; for Cornwallis gave him all the time he wanted. Cornwallis could always be relied upon to do what was most disadvantageous for his own side.<sup>a</sup>

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<sup>a</sup> Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iv, p. 81; G. W. Greene, "Life of General Greene," vol. iii, pp. 213, 215; "Life of Elias Boudinot," by J. J. Boudinot, vol. i, p. 238.



## XCVI.

### THE CAROLINAS IN A STATE OF ANARCHY

THE failures of Cornwallis to the northward had greatly encouraged the scattered and depressed patriots in South Carolina, and the state was in a greater confusion than ever. Marion and Sumter were again at their work. They hid in the swamps when their followers were few, and, when they had increased to enough for a raid, they dashed about here and there, crippling the British and loyalists by sudden attacks. The daily feuds between patriots and loyalists, and the interchange of murders and atrocities in which one side was as bad as the other, kept the people in a constant turmoil, which would have to be suppressed if England was to boast of having brought one American state into that condition of law and order which is supposed to be the ideal of a British colony.

"The animosities between the Whigs and Tories of this state renders their situation truly deplorable. There is not a day passes but there are more or less who fall a sacrifice to this savage disposition. The Whigs seem determined to extirpate the Tories and the Tories the Whigs. Some thousands have fallen in this way in this quarter, and the evil rages with more violence than ever. If a stop cannot be put to these massacres, the country will be depopulated in a few months more as neither Whig nor Tory can live." (Greene to Colonel Davies, G. W. Greene, "Life of General Greene," vol. iii, p. 227 note.)

This deplorable state of affairs Marion and Sumter were able to turn to the advantage of the patriots. Their followers were largely inspired by a mere love of plunder or vengeance, and when that was temporarily gratified they retired to their homes and the two leaders waited in swamps till others of the same sort joined them. Marion was so much disgusted with the sort of men he had to obtain that he wanted to give up his command and go north. But it was only by procuring such people to take their turns that the patriot contest was kept up;

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

and in taking advantage in this way of the demoralized condition of South Carolina, Marion and Sumter had a skill which amounted to genius.<sup>1</sup>

The failures of Cornwallis had left both the Carolinas without any sort of organized government; for the patriot government could not control the loyalists and could not preserve civilized order in its own party. The whole country was at the mercy of the two parties, patriot and loyalist, each of which attempted to regulate the community by lynch law, vigilance committees and assassination.

We gain a glimpse of the state of affairs from the narrative of a loyalist, David Fanning, and from what we learn of the doings of that picturesque character Colonel Cleveland, who at the Battle of King's Mountain had commanded the troops from the Upper Yadkin Valley. Strong in character, commanding in presence, full of southern relentlessness, capable of terrible deeds, and equally capable of southern generosity and friendliness, Cleveland undertook to regulate the Yadkin country in his own way and be his own vigilance committee, judge and hangman. He led expeditions; he was captured by the loyalists and rescued; and he had men who went out and brought victims to his plantation where he pronounced sentence as he pleased.

They brought a loyalist leader, Zachariah Wells, to his cornfield, possibly to avoid an unpleasant scene at the house. Cleveland took the plow reins to hang Wells to a tree, when the boy who had been ploughing pleaded for the life of the poor fellow, who looked so pitiful and had been wounded.

"Jimmie, my son," said Cleveland, "he is a bad man; we must hang all such dangerous Tories, and get them out of their misery."

With tears running down his cheeks, says the narrative, the Colonel adjusted the rope. He could hardly endure the sight of the trembling culprit; but he remembered his own

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<sup>1</sup> G. W. Greene, "Life of General Greene," vol. iii, pp. 265, 293, 294, 298.

## FANNING'S ADVENTURES

dangers and escapes from loyalist raiders as well as the dangers of all the patriots of the Yadkin; and Wells was soon dangling in the air.

Having hung a loyalist by standing him on a log with the rope fastened to a limb and then rolling away the log, he went to the loyalist's companion, and pointed to the still struggling victim.

"You have your choice. Take your place beside him or cut off your own ears and leave the country."

A case knife was handed the man; he slashed off his own ears, and with the blood streaming down his jaws and neck departed.

David Fanning gives us something of the loyalist point of view. He spent the early years of the war in Western South Carolina where he joined loyalist militia organizations and fought the rebels, as he called them. Even when not in a loyalist band and attempting to live at his home on Reburn Creek, he was frequently captured by patriots and carried off to Ninety-Six and imprisoned. He was usually heavily ironed, and on one occasion stripped naked, ironed and chained to the floor. But by the assistance of some confederate, or by the careless manner of guarding him in the disorganized state of the patriots, he always managed to escape. He became such a marked man that he had to live in the woods in great misery, not daring to go to his farm, occasionally communicating with loyalists or obtaining food from them, and watching his chance to join a loyalist uprising. Discovered suddenly one day by patriots he received two bullets in his back, but managed to keep his seat in the saddle.

"After proceeding 12 miles I turned my horse into the woods and remained there eight days; having no support but herbs, except three eggs; my wounds at this time being troublesome and offensive for the want of dressing. I got my horse again and moved about twelve miles to a friend's house, where on my arrival I made a signal, which they knew, to acquaint them of my being alive—a young girl of fourteen years old came to me; but when she came near enough to see me she was frightened so at the sight she run off. I pursued after her on horseback, telling her who I was. She said she knew it was me, but I was dead; that I was

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

then a spirit and stunk yet. I was a long time before I could get her to come to me, I looked so much like a rack of nothing but skin and bones, and my wounds had not been dressed and my clothes all bloody. My misery and situation was beyond explanation." (David Fanning, *Narrative*, p. 10.)

After the defeat of Ferguson the patriots had so much the upper hand that Fanning went to that extremely loyalist section of North Carolina on Deep River and the tributaries of the Cape Fear. There he became commander of a band of loyalists, and led a life like Marion and Sumter, hiding in the woods when his men were few; raiding and fighting when they were numerous. In fact the conditions of the times in the South produced these bands everywhere on both sides, patriot and loyalist. We know more of the bands of Marion, Sumter and Williams because the leaders were more capable and were on the successful side. Fanning on the Deep River, Cleveland on the Upper Yadkin, were characteristic types. Patriotism was rather in the ascendant on the Yadkin and there Cleveland becomes the prominent character and attempts to regulate the district; while on the Deep River Fanning is the regulator. But in their methods the two regulators were practically the same.

"On my return to Little River," says Fanning, "I heard of a Capt. Golson; who had been distressing the Loyalists; and went in search of him, myself; but unfortunately I did not meet him; but fell in, with one of his men, who had been very assiduous, in assisting the rebels. I killed him. I mounted a man of my own on his horse, and returned back. I then took Capt. Currie and the man of my own before mentioned, and went with a design of burning Capt. Golson's house; which I did; and also two others. In my way, I fell in, with a man, who had been very anxious for to have some of my men executed. I sent him word for to moderate and he should have nothing to fear, but if he persisted, I would certainly kill him. He took no notice of this; but persisted, for several months, and on observing me that day, he attempted to escape; but I shot him. . . . In the course of this correspondence, endeavouring to make peace, I had reason to believe they did not intend to be as good as their words; as three of their people followed Capt. Linley, and cut him to pieces with their swords. I was immediately informed of it, and kept a look out for them. Five days after their return, I took two of them



## FANNING'S SUCCESS

and hung them, by way of retaliation, both on the limb of the same tree; the third made his escape." . . .

"On our way I caught a commissary from Salisbury who had some of my men prisoners and almost perished them, and wanted to hang some of them. I carried him immediately to a certain tree, where they had hung one of my men by the name of Jackson, and delivered him up to some of my men, who he had treated ill when prisoners; and they immediately hung him. . . .

"I, then set out for Chatham, where I learned that a wedding was to be that day. On my way I took one prisoner, before I came to the house. There, being but five of us, we immediately surrounded the house in full charge. I ordered them, immediately out of the House; three of my men went into the house and drove them all out one by one; I caused them all to stand in a row to examine them, to see if I knew any of them that was bad men. I found one, by the name of William Doudy, concealed up stairs. One of my men fired at him; as he was running from one house to the other; he received the ball in his shoulder. I then having my pistols in my hand, discharged them both at his breast, with which he fell, and that night expired." (Fanning, Narrative, pp. 41, 46, 52, 56.)

After Cornwallis went up into Virginia, Fanning acted in conjunction with Major Craig who commanded at Wilmington. He brought in prisoners to Craig, received directions from him, and on one occasion helped to take the town of Hillsboro with the patriot governor, his council and several hundred prisoners. He boasted that he and his officers had the whole Deep River country "under protection of the British government until long after the surrender of Lord Cornwallis and the evacuation of Wilmington; and after all the British troops were called to their different ports on the seashore." He accomplished far more than Cornwallis in subduing North Carolina. After the war he followed other loyalists to New Brunswick and Nova Scotia where he lived until his death in 1825.

In the case of Cleveland's victims, and of scores of others, hung here and there all over the Carolinas, as they happened to be caught in the roads or fields, by patriot parties of two or more wandering about for this purpose, we usually read that the victims were Tory horse thieves, robbers and plunderers. Horse stealing, according to these patriot accounts, was con-



## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

fined exclusively to the loyalist party, and gave a certain conventional legal ground to justify in print the summary executions. In Allaire's Diary, one of the few loyalist writings from which we can obtain a glimpse of the other side, we find that the patriot wandering bands were also regarded as horse thieves and plunderers, who devastated loyalist plantations and ill-treated loyalist women.

Allaire speaks of a patriot sermon as "stuffed as full of republicanism as their camp is of horse thieves;" and Colonel Shelby's brother was accused, even by a patriot, of being a mere plunderer.<sup>2</sup> There was a noted loyalist leader called by the patriots "Bloody" Bill Cunningham, and no doubt Cleveland would be called Bloody Ben Cleveland, if we had any loyalist descriptions of him.

In the patriot descriptions of the hangings of patriots by loyalists the victim, never of course a horse thief, but usually a captain or colonel, is apt to escape at the last moment by some extraordinary luck, which seems like a special providence, or else he is killed in a particularly devilish manner. We unfortunately have only a patriot description of Cunningham's work to enable us to compare it with Cleveland's.

"When in violation of the pledges made them, Colonel Hayes and Captain Williams were about to be hung to the pole of a fodder stack, little Joseph Williams cries out in his heart's agony, 'Oh! brother Daniel, what shall I tell mother?'"

"'You shall tell her nothing, you d—d rebel suckling,' said Cunningham as he hewed him down.

"Hanging Hayes and the elder Williams, the pole broke, when the bloody monster cut and slashed with his sword, hacking them to pieces. Eleven others perished in the same manner at the hands of Cunningham and his men." (Draper, "King's Mountain," &c., p. 468.)

Everything the loyalists did, if we can believe patriot descriptions, was of the most revolting cruelty; but similar deeds on the patriot side were merely terrible acts of justice enlightened and enlivened by humor, magnanimity and kindly generosity.

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<sup>2</sup> Draper, *id.*, p. 589.

## CLEVELAND'S METHODS

Some of the loyalists hung Cleveland's overseer by standing him on a log on a hillside with a grape vine from his neck to a limb. Some one then ran down hill butting him off the log. Cleveland's men caught the leader of this band and Cleveland took him out to the same log and tree.

"I hope you will not hang me, Colonel, I am a useful man in the neighborhood, a good mechanic. I have worked for you in peaceful days. Besides I have invented perpetual motion. I have heard you cursing Fanning and other loyalist leaders for putting prisoners to death. Where are your principles? Where is your conscience?"

"Where is my conscience?" roared Cleveland. "Where are my horses and cattle you have stolen, my barns and fences you have destroyed? Where is my overseer? 'Fore God I will do this deed and justify myself before high heaven and my country! Run up the hill, Bill, and butt him off the log. I'll show him perpetual motion."

One day he was absent when a victim was brought in, and his sons asked their mother, who sat quietly smoking her pipe, what they ought to do. They were afraid that if they kept the prisoner over night he might escape.

"What would your father do with him?"

"Hang him."

"Then you must hang him."

And the boys soon had him dangling from the high post of the gate.

"Waste no time about it," said Cleveland one day to his men; "swing him off quick."

"You needn't be in such a d—d hurry about it," coolly retorted the loyalist.

"Boys," said Cleveland, "let him go."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Drapeau, *id.*, pp. 445-450, 458, 468, 481, 487, 498, 499, 502, 503. See also Johnson, "Life of Greene," vol. ii, pp. 249, 250.

## XCVII.

### GREENE LOSES THE BATTLE OF HOBKIRK HILL

HAVING decided to invade South Carolina while Cornwallis delayed at Wilmington, Greene's first point of attack was Camden, the farthest post north, and the fall of which would probably render the other interior posts of South Carolina untenable. He had sent word to Marion and Sumter to be ready to assist, and he sent Lee ahead with a considerable force to act as circumstances should suggest.

In his march Lee met with an adventure which shows the wildness of the country at that time. Between two and three o'clock in the morning one of his watchful pickets reported a noise like men moving through a swamp. Presently it was heard in another quarter. The troops were called to arms and spent the rest of the night facing in different directions, forming and reforming, as sentinels and patrols reported the noise now here now there, and the noise resembled the progress of horsemen concealing with the utmost care their advance. A very intelligent enemy was evidently reconnoitring preparatory to an assault; and Lee exhausted his eloquence in encouraging his men to stand firm and, when the attack came, make the fight of their lives. At daylight they moved forward and quickly found the trail of their enemy, an enormous pack of wolves, which had been travelling their usual route, when, finding it obstructed, they circled round the camp, startling every sentinel and patrol as they pattered through the forest.

On the 15th of April Lee joined Marion and they invested Fort Watson, which protected a fertile region on the Santee River from which the British drew provisions and lay about midway between Camden and Charleston. The fort was built on an Indian mound thirty or forty feet high, strongly stockaded with three rows of abatis. It might have defied attack if Major Mahew, one of Marion's officers, had not thought of

## SITUATION OF CAMDEN

laying logs one on another during the night until a tower was erected from which riflemen could shoot into the fort. As the fort had no cannon the riflemen easily protected themselves with a breastwork of logs on top of the tower; and the British and loyalist garrison of about one hundred and twenty men were very much surprised in the morning to find themselves under a searching fire from which there was no escape but surrender.<sup>1</sup>

Greene had been in hopes of coming upon Camden by surprise, as Gates had attempted the year before; but his movements were too slow; and all he could do was to begin an inadequate sort of siege. The British commander, Lord Rawdon, was greatly surprised to learn that the patriots were coming to attack him. He had understood that Greene had been ruined by Cornwallis and had fled to Virginia.

The village of Camden, now famous for its antiquities, beautiful gardens and comfortable inns for winter tourists, had been originally called Pine Tree and had been established some twenty years before as a place of supply for the settlers who cultivated the land along that part of the Wateree River. In the early stages of the Revolution, its people had followed the example of several other places in America and named their town after Lord Camden, who had argued so strenuously in the House of Lords against the right of Parliament to levy taxes in a British colony.

Pine Tree Creek flowed into the Wateree River in such a way that the two streams enclosed Camden within water boundaries formed like the letter U. The village was placed near the bottom of the U, and the open space was almost closed by two small swampy brooks flowing respectively into the creek and the river. Redoubts and a stockade protected the village which, being surrounded on all sides but one by streams and swamps, was a formidable stronghold.

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<sup>1</sup> Tarleton, *Narrative*, p. 471; Lee, *Memoirs*, vol. ii, pp. 50-53; Gordon, *"American War,"* vol. iv, p. 81; G. W. Greene, *"Life of General Greene,"* vol. iii, pp. 235-238.

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Greene, having no cannon and not a large force, proceeded to invest the place by closing the open part of the U and directing Sumter and Marion to cut off supplies on the east and west. To make his investiture more complete, he entered within the U and took a position at Logtown, only six hundred yards north of the fortifications of Camden. But finding those defences very strong he remained only a day at Logtown and fell back to a position where the two little brooks almost closed the open part of the U. There on a ridge called Hobkirk Hill, near the present site of hotels and handsome modern residences, he placed his army in a good position, hoping to entice Lord Rawdon to make a sortie.

Accounts differ as to the way the battle was begun. According to one version a patriot sergeant deserted to the British and told Lord Rawdon that Greene's army was weak, short of provisions, without artillery, and that Sumter who was expected with 1000 reinforcements, had not arrived. According to the British version Lord Rawdon learned that Greene had made the mistake of sending his artillery a day's march in the rear and changing his mind had sent the militia to bring the guns back. Rawdon tried to seize this moment of Greene's weakness and sallied out with nearly his whole force, arming his musicians and drummers and leaving only the sick and the loyalist militia in Camden.

It was on the morning of the 25th of April, and Rawdon's men, by keeping to their right along the swamps of Pine Tree Creek, believed that they had surprised the patriots, who had just obtained fresh provisions and were cooking and washing their clothes. But Greene seems to have been ready enough to receive them. His men rushed to arms from their cooking and washing; some barefoot; others without their coats; and the baggage was hurried off to the rear. Greene saw that the British were advancing with the usual narrow front, and he decided to envelop them and attack their flanks and rear. It was apparently a good plan, and would probably have succeeded if the regiments that attacked the flanks had not been raw militia who were dismayed and retreated



## GREENE DISAPPOINTED

before they reached the enemy. Rawdon instantly extended his line to avoid the flanking movement; and soon after had the satisfaction of seeing the patriots under Gunby and Hawes, who were attacking his front, fall back. They had become confused and Gunby withdrew them to form anew. But believing that they had been ordered to retreat and finding the British pursuing, they gave way and no efforts of their officers could rally them. Greene, bitterly disappointed, could do nothing but make the retreat as orderly as possible and try to rescue his artillery. He was assisted at the last moment by Colonel Washington's cavalry, which had been sent to attack the enemy's rear, but unable to accomplish anything returned just in time to check the British by a charge.

Greene had had about 1200 men in action against the British 900, and should have won a signal victory, but for the failure of the militia on the flanks and the mistake of Colonel Gunby. If Sumter had come up with his reinforcements it would have added a thousand men to the patriot ranks and might have altered the result. But Sumter, accustomed to the freedom of a partisan commander, was reluctant to subordinate himself to Greene; and Greene was obliged to be patient and humor him. Each side had lost over 250 men in the battle, and the victory was decidedly in favor of Rawdon, for Greene was obliged to fall back for five or six miles.<sup>2</sup>

Not only was his defeat at Hobkirk Hill a great surprise and shock, but Greene felt more than ever the difficulty of drawing his supplies from the northward over the wilderness roads. He had no armorer or any means of making the slightest repairs in his guns and artillery. Everything must come from Virginia. The large reinforcements he had expected from Delaware, Maryland and Virginia, had not arrived, and the time of service of many of his troops was expiring.

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<sup>2</sup> Tarleton, Narrative, pp. 460-470; Johnson, "Life of Greene," vol. ii, pp. 72-95; G. W. Greene, "Life of General Greene," vol. iii, pp. 239-260; Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iv, p. 81; Lee, Memoirs, vol. ii, pp. 54-67; Kirkland and Kennedy, "Historic Camden," pp. 221-273.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

"North Carolina," he said, "has got next to no men in the field, and few militia, and those the worst in the world, for they have neither pride nor principle to bind them to any party or to the discharge of their duty. Generals Marion and Sumter have a few people who adhere to them, perhaps more from a desire and the opportunity of plundering, than from any inclination to support the independence of the United States." (G. W. Greene, "Life of General Greene," vol. iii, p. 265.)

In this situation, with Sumter refusing to obey his orders and carrying off the only good North Carolina troops on free-booting raids, where they could indulge themselves in the joy of plunder, Greene feared he would have to retreat northward or become a mere roving partisan. In his moments of gloomy foreboding, he thought that he had made a mistake in his southern movement, and that the theory of Cornwallis about Virginia might be right. He saw himself driven back again across North Carolina. "Lord Cornwallis," he said, "will establish a chain of posts along the James River in Virginia, and the southern states thus cut off will die like the tail of a snake."<sup>3</sup>

So depressed was he that he seemed determined to change his whole system and sent orders withdrawing Lee from the attempt to intercept the British command under Watson. But within a short time he reversed this order, and returned again to his old confidence, believed that his original plan was after all the best, and if time only were allowed him all the South Carolina posts would fall.

Meantime, Watson had eluded Lee and Marion, and on the 7th of May got safely into Camden. The next day Rawdon, strengthened by this reinforcement, made a sally out of the town, and by a night march tried to get into the rear of Greene's army. But the unceasing vigilance to which the patriots had been trained, gave ample warning and they fell back five miles to Sandy Creek. Here Greene left his horse pickets and light infantry to act as a check on the enemy and retired four miles further. When Rawdon came upon the pickets, he was not only delayed, but completely deceived. He believed that he was

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<sup>3</sup> G. W. Greene, "Life of General Greene," vol. iii, pp. 266, 275; Lee, *Memoirs*, vol. ii, pp. 67, 68; Johnson, "Life of Greene," vol. ii, p. 117.

## CAMDEN ABANDONED

confronted by the main patriot army and returned to Camden.

Under Greene's system of extraordinary watchfulness, quick movements, excellent cavalry, and partisan raiding under past masters of the art like Marion and Sumter, it was soon evident that the English, with their slower methods, would not be able to maintain their widely separated garrisons. Greene was always obliged to retreat when they attacked him, and had lost the only pitched battle he had fought; and yet at the same time, his partisan raiding was cutting their communications and wearing them out. This was quickly illustrated when, two days after his attempt to surprise the patriots, Rawdon, seeing that his communications with Charleston were being cut to pieces, abandoned Camden, burning his baggage and part of the town, retiring slowly towards Charleston, and stopping at Monks Corner within thirty miles of that place.

Thus Camden had fallen, although Greene's attack on it had failed. Nothing showed more clearly the essential weakness of the British garrisons, the folly of Cornwallis in abandoning them and the wisdom of Greene's movement against them. The sudden fall of Camden weakened every other British post. Within three days Sumter took Orangeburg and its large supplies of provisions without firing a shot, and Marion took Fort Motte, which he had been besieging for nearly a week.

Fort Motte was the summer mansion house of a prosperous patriot planter. It was one of those richly furnished southern homes, of which we have read so much, equipped for lavish hospitality and fitted with the evidences of a refinement and culture, which are at times so surprising to persons of northern prejudices. The British had converted it into a fort by a ditch and stockade, while Mrs. Motte, the widow of its owner, lived near by in an old farm house to which she had removed most of her treasures of art and good living, and where she maintained that defiant but gracious dignity so natural to women of her class in South Carolina.

It is another of the numerous instances which show how carefully in some instances the British regular officers refrained

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

from interference with patriot women and families. The scene of this very agreeable lady, living in her free and courageous splendor, with all her property and fine wines, within a few hundred yards of her husband's enemies, appealed strongly to Harry Lee; and his description of it is one of the best in his memoirs. He had no sooner arrived to take part in the siege, than she insisted on him and his officers living at her house, where she spread the table "with taste and fashion and all the luxuries of her opulent country, offered without reserve the best wines of Europe, antiquated relics of happier days." She presided over their headquarters and attended to the sick and wounded with a charming assumption that that was her position and her right.

But an unpleasant day came for Lee. McPherson who commanded the fort was very obstinate in his defence. He was threatened with a general massacre if he held out after resistance had become hopeless; but all to no effect. Lord Rawdon was rapidly approaching to raise the siege; and there seemed to be nothing that could be done except to set fire to the great mansion in the stockade with burning arrows. Lee with a heavy heart went to Mrs. Motte to explain to her the necessity of the decision.

"With the smile of complacency this exemplary lady listened to the embarrassed officer, and gave instant relief to his agitated feelings, by declaring, that she was gratified with the opportunity of contributing to the good of her country, and that she should view the approaching scene with delight." (Lee, *Memoirs*, vol. ii, p. 77.)

Shortly afterwards she handed him from among her collections a bow and arrows brought from India, which she said might be better adapted to his purpose than those which he had prepared. Her beautiful mansion was soon in flames, and the gallant McPherson surrendered.

Lee reminded him that for his obstinate resistance he and his men could be now shot down without mercy, and McPherson gracefully replied that he was in the hands of his captors. Whereupon, victor and vanquished went over to Mrs. Motte's

## INTERIOR POSTS TAKEN

and partook of a "sumptuous dinner," their host presiding with such "unaffected politeness" and "conversing with such ease, vivacity and good sense that she obliterated all recollection of injury and soothed all the ire of the conflict."

Within a few days the British abandoned Neilson's Ferry, and surrendered to Lee Fort Granby with over three hundred loyalist militia. By the 24th of May Greene could boast that he had taken nearly 800 prisoners and had compelled the evacuation or surrender of all the interior British posts except Ninety-Six and Augusta.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Lee, *Memoirs*, vol. ii, pp. 68-87; Tarleton, *Narrative*, pp. 473-479.



## XCVIII.

### THE FALL OF AUGUSTA AND NINETY-SIX

GREENE could hardly hope to take the seaports Charleston and Savannah, for they could evidently be held by the British so long as their navy controlled the sea. But he believed he had good chances against Augusta and Ninety-Six. Augusta was garrisoned largely by loyalists under Colonel Brown; and the task of reducing this place was given to Lee, who spent the last two weeks of May in a regular siege by parallel trenches. When the place finally surrendered, the patriot hatred for loyalists nearly brought on a general massacre. Colonel Grierson was murdered, and the life of the commander, Colonel Brown, was saved only by a strong guard of continental troops.<sup>1</sup>

Ninety-Six, after Camden the most important British post in the interior, had been a colonial fort for watching and controlling the Indian tribes to the westward, especially the Cherokees, and was called Ninety-Six because it was ninety-six miles from the principal Cherokee village. It was situated in a fertile loyalist region, in the most populous and powerful part of the state, was comparatively healthy in summer, and had been selected by the British for these reasons as an important stronghold. But the fall of Camden and other places had rendered Ninety-Six a useless position, and orders had been sent to its commander, Colonel Cruger, a New York loyalist, to retire to Augusta.<sup>2</sup>

He never received the order and for some time had had the loyalist planters of the surrounding country engaged with their slaves in strengthening his defences. He had five hundred and

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<sup>1</sup> Lee, *Memoirs*, vol. ii, pp. 88-118.

<sup>2</sup> B. F. Stevens, "Clinton-Cornwallis Correspondence," vol. i, p. 242; Lee, *Memoirs*, vol. ii, pp. 96, 97.

## SIEGE OF NINETY-SIX

fifty troops, most of them loyalists, and was prepared for a vigorous resistance when Greene on the 22d of May with a thousand men appeared before his works.

The defences consisted of a stockade fort and a strong star-shaped redoubt with the village between them. Not having force enough to assail both defences, Greene began on the redoubt, and Kosciuszko, a Polish engineer officer, started a trench which would gradually reach the works. But the next morning the garrison sallied out, drove off his workmen, and captured their tools. Another trench was begun and by working day and night, with all the rest of the patriot army resisting the continual sallies of the garrison, the trenches gradually approached the redoubt. Several towers of logs, like the one invented by Mahew at the siege of Fort Watson, were erected to enable the patriot riflemen to shoot into the fort, and this ingenious arrangement kept the garrison closely under cover.

On the 8th of June Lee arrived from the taking of Augusta, and his force was immediately put to work digging trenches to approach the stockade on the other side of the town. Close to the stockade ran a stream from which the garrison drew water, and within four days Lee had approached so close that the garrison could draw water from this stream only at night. The whole siege was prospering most favorably. A battery had been raised high enough to command the redoubt, whose garrison had been obliged to defend themselves by raising their redoubt higher with sand bags. But suddenly the garrison received cheering news by a clever and daring device.

A countryman rode along the American lines on the south side, talking with the troops, when suddenly he put spurs to his horse and, escaping a shower of bullets, dashed towards the town, holding high in his hand a letter which announced that large reinforcements had arrived at Charleston from England and that Lord Rawdon was marching with over 2000 men to raise the siege.

Greene had known of this new movement, and had ordered Sumter to get in front of Rawdon, delay him in every possible

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

way, and at the same time strip the country of all the cattle and provisions which might fall into his hands. But Sumter, hating to obey any order, had an opinion of his own about Rawdon, and supposing that he would attack Fort Granby went to protect that place. Thus Rawdon had an opportunity to pass Sumter, and leave him far behind; and using this advantage to the utmost, he pressed on by forced marches to Ninety-Six.

Greene now ordered a desperate assault on both stockade and redoubt in the hope of taking them before Rawdon could arrive. He was in doubt about the advisability of an assault; but his men with one voice entreated to be led against the fort, and declared that they would wipe out the memory of their defeat at Hobkirk Hill. With long hooks on poles, they rushed at the redoubt to drag the sand bags from the top of it; and Lee, after heavy loss among his best men, entered the stockade. But the attack on the redoubt utterly failed; and rather than sacrifice any more men, Greene withdrew his whole force from the assault, abandoned the stockade during the night, and the next morning, the 19th of June, retired from before Ninety-Six after an unsuccessful siege of 28 days.<sup>9</sup>

The loyalists who served in the British army seldom distinguished themselves as soldiers. But exceptions must be made in the case of Cruger, who defended Ninety-Six, and in the case of Brown, who defended Augusta. Both of them won the admiration of our army by the vigor and intelligence, as well as the gallantry of their defence.

But Greene was again sorely disappointed, and although he appeared cheerful to his men and praised their devotion and courage in the assault, he was again beginning to lose confidence in his plans. Counting his raiders, he had something of a force,

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<sup>9</sup> Lee, *Memoirs*, vol. ii, pp. 96-99, 110-131; G. W. Greene, "Life of General Greene," vol. iii, pp. 301-310; Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iv, pp. 92-93; Tarleton, *Narrative*, pp. 479-502; Johnson, "Life of Greene," vol. ii, p. 130.

## OFFICERS DISHEARTENED

but he seemed to be unable to bring them together for united action. Lee was the only one of them he could control.

"It was my wish," he wrote to Marion, "to have fought Lord Rawdon before he got to Ninety-Six and could I have collected your force and that of General Sumter and Pickens, I would have done it and am persuaded we should have defeated him; but being left alone I was obliged to retire. I am surprised the people should be so averse to joining in some general plan of operations. It will be impossible to carry on the war to advantage or even to attempt to hold the country, unless your force can be directed to a point; and as to flying parties here and there, they are of no consequence in the great events of war." (G. W. Greene, "Life of General Greene," vol. iii, p. 320.)

He believed that he had suffered a bad defeat; his dash into South Carolina seemed to be useless; and all that the croakers had foretold seemed to be happening. Some of his officers were so disheartened that they tried to persuade him to fall back into Virginia. It was now known that Cornwallis instead of following him had gone up into Virginia. For the time being, this seemed to be a clever piece of generalship, for it had prevented the arrival of patriot assistance from Virginia, which Greene had expected and relied upon up to the last moment.

"We want reinforcements in this quarter," he wrote Lafayette, who was now in command of the patriot troops in Virginia, "but I am afraid to call upon you, as I fear you are no less embarrassed and oppressed than we are. What a herculean task we have! To contend with a formidable enemy with a handful of men. In your operations you have one advantage which we have not, that is, you are free from Tories. Here they are as thick as the trees; and we can neither get provisions or forage without large guards to protect them. They even steal our horses within the limits of the camp. . . . They are increasing their cavalry by every means in their power, and have a greater number than we have, though not of equal goodness. We are trying to increase ours. Enlarge your cavalry or you are inevitably ruined." (G. W. Greene, "Life of General Greene," vol. iii, p. 320.)

Greene, it appears, had hoped that the speedy capture of Ninety-Six, the last of the interior strongholds, would have left him free to move a large part of his force, especially the

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

cavalry, to Virginia. He wanted to coöperate with Lafayette in attacking Lord Cornwallis in that state and thus double check what seemed to be the theory of his Lordship and the Ministry. For this purpose, as soon as he heard that Cornwallis was moving from Wilmington into Virginia, he had written to have most of the militia of that state retained within it, and only a small portion of them sent to South Carolina. But even this small portion was countermanded by the Virginia governor; and Greene now felt that all his plans might be ruined.

He had heard that a powerful French fleet was coming to America; and he instantly saw, what indeed was quite obvious, that this fleet could enter Chesapeake Bay, cut off Cornwallis from reinforcements from New York, and, with the assistance of a land force, destroy his army.<sup>4</sup>

For the present, however, Greene was obliged to abandon South Carolina, or seem to abandon it, and he retreated toward Charlotte in North Carolina, encouraging his troops to clean their arms and wash their clothes, keeping them together by frequent roll calls, and trying in vain to collect his scattered raiders, who now had plans of their own. As Greene seemed to have been defeated, the class of men sometimes called militia, who rode with Marion and Sumter, were inclined to seek their homes or join the British.

Rawdon's victory had had a terrifying effect on the country, and Greene described the patriot families flying in all directions. Rawdon, however, pursued Greene only about forty or fifty miles, enough as he supposed to win the *éclat* of having driven the patriot army from the state. He dared not venture far from his base in the hot weather; and as he returned to Ninety-Six, many of his troops in their heavy English uniforms dropped dead from the increasing heat.

Greene and his officers need not have been so much depressed. Their plan was essentially sound, and the "flying parties here and there" were more effective than they supposed. The British accomplished nothing by driving Greene out of

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<sup>4</sup> G. W. Greene, "Life of General Greene," vol. iii, pp. 322, 323.



## NINETY-SIX ABANDONED

the state; for Rawdon had no sooner returned to Ninety-Six than he saw that he must abandon it.

It was useless, and indeed impossible, for him to hold it when Camden and the other interior posts were lost. The reinforcements he had recently received from England he seems to have deemed insufficient to occupy those posts. He was in ill health, tired of the country, disgusted no doubt at being left in a position where he could win no distinction, and was anxious to return to England.

The fatal errors of Cornwallis had needed only time to produce their natural result. The British control in South Carolina was falling to pieces. Greene had broken it by merely retreating when attacked and fighting losing battles.

The abandonment of Ninety-Six was a serious blow to the loyalists, who were very numerous in the fertile region round it. They had relied on the great British nation to protect them, give them orderly government, and the "blessings of the free English constitution;" and now that great power had failed them, and they were to be abandoned to the merciless vengeance of the patriots, whom they had raided, killed and robbed, and who were ready to kill and rob in return. They were in direful straits, and, whatever we may think of their opinions, their misfortunes deserve our sympathy.

Lord Rawdon fully appreciating the situation offered to leave some troops to help them make a stand and defend themselves; or, if they preferred, they could bring their families and all the effects they could carry and accompany him to safety within the British lines at Charleston. It would only be temporary exile, he said. They could return when British sovereignty was restored. Many of them accepted this offer and made up a sad and motley train of exiles, like the patriots who followed Greene when he retreated across North Carolina.

No doubt they looked forward to returning and had dreams of being enriched out of confiscated rebel estates. The recent reinforcements that arrived from England had come out, it is said, supposing that the fighting was over, that South Carolina was conquered, and that nothing remained for them to do but

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

to settle on the forfeited lands. But they were not to become Americans, and very few of the loyalists who escaped with Rawdon ventured to come back. They scattered like the northern loyalists among the West India Islands and other British possessions, or perished of disease and misery in a wretched suburb of Charleston, called Rawdowntown, into which they were crowded.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iv, p. 93; Tarleton, Narrative, p. 502.

Lord Rawdon had been through the whole war, beginning with Bunker Hill. He afterwards had a distinguished career in Parliament and as *commander-in-chief and governor-general in India*.

## XCIX.

### THE BATTLE OF EUTAW SPRINGS CONFINES THE BRITISH TO THE SEAPORTS

AFTER abandoning their pursuit of Greene, the British under Rawdon stopped at Orangeburg, about seventy-five miles northwest of Charleston. Greene, of course, promptly returned to South Carolina, which he declared he would save for patriotism or die in the attempt. But on approaching Orangeburg on the 12th of July, he found the place too strong and the summer too far advanced for any aggressive operations. He accordingly retired a little farther north to a sandy ridge or tableland, called the High Hills of Santee, some two hundred feet above the surrounding country, and comparatively healthy in summer time.

Lee, Marion and Sumter were, however, kept moving in spite of the heat, and sent to attack the British nearer Charleston, at Monks Corner and at Dorchester, where they were occupying some churches as forts. The taking of these posts was expected to compel the enemy to evacuate Orangeburg. It had not that effect, but was in other respects successful. Sumter might have taken the whole garrison of six hundred men at Monks Corner if he had not mistaken a covering party for the advance of a general attack, and the delay allowed the garrison to escape. The posts were evacuated, however, and the retreating British pursued. One hundred and fifty were taken prisoners, two hundred horses captured and great quantities of stores and baggage destroyed with very slight loss to the Americans. The British loss was heavy; for many of them were "raw Irishmen who knew little or nothing of firing."<sup>1</sup>

In this expedition we meet for the first time with the name of

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<sup>1</sup> G. W. Greene, "Life of General Greene," vol. iii, p. 333; Lee, Memoirs, vol. ii, pp. 142-158.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

Wade Hampton, who, like Lee, left a descendant to become celebrated in the Civil War of 1861. The Hampton of the Revolution was a young South Carolina officer, commanding Sumter's cavalry, who on this occasion attacked and dispersed a party of mounted refugees.

The English occupation of South Carolina was now still more closely confined to the sea-coast. The hot, enervating weather was on in full force, and both sides rested. Greene kept steadily disciplining his men on the sand hills of Santee, with drilling in the cool of the mornings and evenings and four roll-calls a day.

With both armies removed from the interior of the state the disorder, murders and robberies became worse than ever.

"Almost every person," wrote Wade Hampton, "that remained in this settlement after the army marched, seems to have combined in committing robberies, the most base and inhuman that ever disgraced mankind." (G. W. Greene, "Life of General Greene," vol. iii, p. 342.)

"Turn what way you will," wrote Greene, "you have nothing but the mournful widow and the plaints of the fatherless child; and behold nothing but houses desolated, and plantations laid waste. Ruin is in every form and misery in every shape." (G. W. Greene, *id.*, p. 351.)

Greene tried by every means in his power to restrain the resentment and savagery of his own irregular patriot bands. But he had no way of compelling them to obey him. He had to keep on good terms with them and he could only gently argue with them that "the idea of exterminating the Tories is no less barbarous than impolitic."<sup>2</sup> In the hope of remedying such a state of anarchy the patriots restored their former civil government. Rutledge, the patriot governor, returned from North Carolina, where he had been living in exile, and called upon the civil magistrates and the militia officers to enforce law and order.

Greene was disciplining his force with much severity on the sand hills, hanging and whipping for disaffection or

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<sup>2</sup> Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iv, pp. 99, 100.

## THE MOVE TO ORANGEBURG

desertion, and trying to make regular soldiers out of wild militia. Sumter's independence was again giving trouble, and he would have disbanded his separate command if Greene had not peremptorily stopped the process. In August the British abandoned Georgetown, destroying all the valuable supplies it contained and burning the town. They now held only Orangeburg, Charleston, Wilmington and Savannah.

At the end of August Greene had but twenty-six hundred men, all told, and only sixteen hundred of these were continentals. Through the prodigious blunders of Lord Cornwallis, this little force was conquering South Carolina. There was a month more of hot, unhealthy weather, but Greene resolved to move upon the enemy's position at Orangeburg. The distance in a straight line was not much more than thirty miles, but within that thirty miles flowed the Santee River, which swollen by rains had overflowed its usual channel and was a vast yellow flood sweeping through forests and canebrakes as it bore its burden of floating logs and weeds to the sea. To cross this obstruction he had to go some twenty miles northward to Camden and come down the side on which were the British. As he approached them he learned that they were retiring to make a stand at a strong position, called Hutaw Springs, farther down the Santee.

The place consisted of a planter's brick house in a clearing, and by the side of this house General Stuart had his camp and tents with 2300 men. In preparing to meet Greene he formed his troops in a single line in the woods outside of the clearing with some reserves in their rear. Greene, who this time was the attacking party, arranged that when his men reached the enemy they should assume the Morgan formation, with the militia in one body in front and the reliable continentals and veterans in another body some distance behind them.

As the Americans approached early in the morning of the 8th of September, the advance reconnoitring parties of both sides unexpectedly met and the British charged, supposing the enemy to be militia. But instead of militia it was Light Horse Lee's legion which returned the charge and scattered the Brit-



## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

ish. Soon afterwards, the two armies were close together in an open front attack and firing heavily.

Stuart, recognizing the Morgan plan of militia in front, told his men to stand firm and drive them back. But the militia this time had Marion and Pickens with them, and the two lines, militia and British, fired steadily into each other at close range without wavering. There was no throwing away of loaded guns as at Guilford Court House, and when the centre of the militia was finally forced back each man of them had fired seventeen rounds.

The British had now made their usual mistake of using nearly their whole force in the beginning with the risk of having it all fatigued or demoralized. But Greene had been using only his worst troops and he now reinforced the militia centre until it again held its own. Stuart brought up his last reserves and for the second time forced back the militia centre and pressed forward as if assured of victory. Greene seized this moment to carry out the Morgan method of charging with his whole reserved force, and Lee attacked the British left flank. The Americans seem to have been well provided with bayonets, and, owing probably to the severe discipline and drill which Greene had so long enforced, they were used as effectively as the world-renowned bayonet of the Briton. Stuart's army was soon flying through the woods to seek refuge in its camp and the brick house in the clearing.

The pursuit of the Americans was so close that some of them had a desperate struggle with the enemy at the half-closed door of the house, and one of them almost succeeded in entering the door. Unfortunately many of our troops stopped at the British tents to revel in the unexpected supplies of food and rum. Part of the British left had secured itself behind an impenetrable thicket of black jack, and, with this advantage, and the fire of his men from the windows of the house, Stuart was able to prevent a panic and reform his line of battle in the clearing.

The house seems to have been as important to the English as the Chew house had been at the Battle of Germantown. The

## SUCCESS OF THE BATTLE

Americans had to retreat from the fire from its windows and their cannon were of too small a calibre to batter down its walls.

Colonel Washington charged the black jack thicket with his cavalry in vain; and in his second attempt his horse was shot under him and he was wounded and taken prisoner. Hampton, who took his place, was also repulsed, and the British left the thicket to join their comrades in a charge on the Americans who were still drinking and plundering in the tents. In attempting to resist this charge our troops were again repulsed and lost their artillery.

It was now near the full heat of mid-day and Greene, though disappointed in not achieving a complete rout of the enemy, felt that he had done enough. Stuart had been fortunate in his position, with the house and the thicket backed by Eutaw Creek. Greene decided to leave him there, and the American army returned to the plantation where they had camped the previous day, knowing full well that Stuart was so badly crippled that he would have to abandon Eutaw Springs. Lee describes the losses in killed and wounded as one-fifth of the British force, and one-fourth of the Americans. But the Americans took five hundred prisoners and the British only sixty. It was a mortifying and disappointing battle he said, and the victory was claimed by both sides.<sup>9</sup>

It was, however, curiously like all the other battles Greene fought in the South; not immediately successful, yet afterwards rendered completely successful by the enemy abandoning the position for which they had fought. It was to a certain extent more immediately successful than the others; for it will be observed that on this occasion Greene was the attacking party, and drove the British before him until they took refuge in the house. His willingness to be the attacking party and his supreme confidence in charging, so different from his former

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<sup>9</sup> Lee, *Memoirs*, vol. ii, pp. 276-295; G. W. Greene, "Life of General Greene," vol. iii, p. 388; Tarleton, *Narrative*, pp. 508-518; Johnson, "Life of Greene," vol. ii, pp. 220-237.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

caution and hesitation, seem to indicate that his long and persistent efforts in discipline, especially during the summer on the sand hills, had at last given him a more efficient army.

The day after this battle Stuart destroyed his supplies at Eutaw Springs. He left 70 of his wounded, and retreated during the coolness of the night to Charleston, followed closely by the indefatigable Marion and Lee, who charged his rear at every opportunity.

Greene with the patriot army returned by easy marches to finish their summer rest on the Santee Hills. They needed recuperation from the battle, which, though in practical effect a victory, had severely crippled them. They had to care for nearly four hundred of their own wounded and many of Stuart's, besides a long list of those sick with the fevers of September and other diseases of camp life close to the tropics. Greene's hospitals extended from the High Hills of Santee northward to Charlotte in North Carolina. They were not really hospitals, but mere shelters where the sick lay to recover or die as chance directed. They were lucky if they could have straw to die on; they were without medicines or nurses; and often, as Greene reported, eaten by maggots.

The hospital stores which he expected had been captured on their way through Virginia. He had no quinine, or bark as it was then called, and could only wait for the cold weather to abate the malignity of the fevers. He had not even salt for the men who were well, and to stop a mutiny on this account was obliged to hang one of the ringleaders. Through such destitution and sufferings, and always by a narrow margin, was the revolutionary movement kept alive. Ten days after he had defeated Stuart, Greene was seriously ill and could scarcely have mustered a thousand effective men.

He had, it is true, confined the British to the three southern seaports of Wilmington, Charleston and Savannah. But these ports were the commercial and strategic keys to the South. So long as they held them and had control of the sea the English could come again and occupy the country. It was a mere question of sending sufficient troops for the purpose. Greene could

## END OF GREENE'S WORK

not consider his work complete, and incidents were constantly occurring which increased his anxiety.

He learned that Stuart, having refreshed his troops in Charleston and reinforced them, had again sallied out to invade the country districts, and was driving Marion and Wade Hampton before him. He learned also that Cornwallis, alarmed by the arrival of the French fleet in the Chesapeake, was preparing to leave Virginia and retreat into South Carolina. It seemed as if Stuart had come out to keep Greene occupied and prevent him interfering with the return of Cornwallis. At the same time Fanning and his loyalists in North Carolina, under command of Colonel McNeil, feeling greatly encouraged by this news, seized the patriot governor of North Carolina, together with some of his council, and carried them prisoners into Wilmington, which was still in British hands.<sup>1</sup>

But Stuart soon returned to the safety of Charleston and Cornwallis never left Virginia. Greene had fought his last battle. He could do nothing more with the British, although he made plans and attempts and the raiding and skirmishing continued for more than a year. The extraordinary conditions under which he had conquered the South can be best appreciated by his own description of his army nearly a year after the battle of Eutaw Springs.

"For upwards of two months more than one-third of our army was naked, with nothing but a breech cloth about them, and never came out of their tents; and the rest were as ragged as wolves. Our condition was little better in the articles of provision. Our beef was perfect carrion; and even bad as it was, we were frequently without any. An army thus clothed and thus fed may be considered in a desperate situation." (Lee, *Memoirs*, vol. ii, p. 459.)

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<sup>1</sup> Stedman, "American War," vol. ii, p. 400.

## C.

### THE SCENE SHIFTS TO VIRGINIA

DURING the autumn of 1780 and the winter and spring of 1781, while Greene was struggling with the Southern situation, the Northern patriots were passing through a period of the greatest depression. They were not yet aware of the change which Cornwallis and the Ministry were working in Clinton's policy, and they could see only their own helplessness. No money was left; the paper currency was on the eve of complete worthlessness; and the Congress was bankrupt. Washington had not been able to fight a battle for two years. He had had to allow his men to maraud to feed themselves, and he borrowed food from the French. He could barely keep together enough starving troops to hold the strategic position of the Hudson Highlands.

"We seem to be verging so fast to destruction," he said, "that I am filled with sensations to which I have been a stranger till within these three months." People began to think that the contest was over and that there was nothing more to do but to make money out of the disturbed conditions of the times. On the continent of Europe there was a general feeling that affairs had reached a crisis. In England the King wrote that the distress in America would bring peace during the summer unless the British forces met with some disaster; and for once Washington entirely agreed with him.

There was only one resource, one hope left, and that was that France would double her assistance, send out another fleet and another army, and furnish a large loan of money which must take the form, not of credits allowed the Congress in Europe or payment of the bills drawn on Franklin, but of a cargo of actual gold and silver sent out to America to put the finances of the Congress on a specie basis.

In November, 1780, the Congress had sent a memorial to the



## AN APPEAL TO FRANCE

French Court describing the complete failure of the patriot resources and asking for the additional fleet and army and the loan of specie to at least 25,000,000 francs. In January they decided to reinforce this memorial by sending a special envoy. Lafayette had obtained the first fleet and army in 1778, and now another of Washington's aides was selected, Colonel John Laurens, son of Henry Laurens the ex-president of the Congress imprisoned in the Tower of London. Colonel Laurens was only twenty-six years old, but of a very promising, capable mind; and it was thought that he would make a good envoy because he would go as an eye witness of both military affairs and of the general depression of the cause.

It is significant of the weakness of the Congress and of the greater reliance that was being placed on Washington as the upholder of the cause, not only in military affairs, but in diplomacy and statecraft, that young Laurens was sent to him to receive his instructions on this most momentous mission of the war, and that Washington wrote the documents that made this last appeal to France.

There was nothing in them that could offend the most delicate French sensibility. There was everything that appealed to the pride of France. But the French nation had their choice. If they really wanted America to be independent, now was the time; a loan of specie, naval superiority on the coast, and another army, or the patriot party could only make "a feeble expiring effort next campaign," and then give up opposition to England. Washington had already written to the Count de Guichen and to Luzerne. Laurens carried written instructions and a letter to Franklin. Both were to be shown to the French Court; and judged by the necessities of the case no papers of greater importance were ever written in America.<sup>1</sup>

Before Laurens reached Paris, Franklin had laid before

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<sup>1</sup> *Writings of Washington*, Ford edition, vol. ix, pp. 102-109; Durand, "New Material for History of American Revolution," pp. 218-221, 244, 245; Sumner, "Financier and Finances of the Am. Rev.," vol. i, pp. 258, 298, 301; "Franklin in France," pp. 282-286; Johnson, "Life of Greene," vol. i, p. 33 note.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

Vergennes the memorial of the Congress of November, 1780. A loan and a promise of some ships and troops had been secured. The French Court would not lend the whole of the 25,000,000 francs; but agreed to furnish 6,000,000 as a free gift and to lend 4,000,000 besides. A reply to this effect, coupled with the promise of more troops and ships, was sent to the Congress and received by them on the 22d of May, 1781.

Laurens reached Paris in April, and seems to have secured from the French Court an agreement to guarantee a loan of 10,000,000 francs if it could be obtained in Holland. Most of his efforts appear to have been directed towards securing more troops and ships and greater military energy on the part of France; and in this he pressed indiscreetly and gave offence. He was guilty of the old indiscretion John Adams was constantly falling into; he would insist on saying that France was indebted to America for helping her to cripple England as much as America was indebted to France for helping her to win independence.

Adams, however, gives Laurens the credit of securing the 7000 French troops and the very large fleet under De Grasse, which reached the American coast the following summer. But Franklin had been working to that end; and so had nearly everybody. It was a general pressure brought to bear on France, and was, no doubt, assisted by the courts of Prussia, Russia and Sweden; for they had all become alarmed at the weakness of the American cause. They feared that they would miss their grand opportunity for humbling England and preventing her searching their ships. They felt that if she conquered America there would be nothing to check her complete dominion of the sea.

Adams, in one of the most amusing outbursts of vanity he ever exhibited, suggests that he himself had as much part as anybody in procuring the fleet and troops, because his brief memorial to the Netherlands, occurring at the lucky moment, awoke, as if by magic, all Europe to the really momentous importance of the armed neutrality against England. The continental nations saw that American independence was the

## THE MINISTRY HOPEFUL

only way to force upon England the doctrine that free ships make free goods and that a neutral vessel may carry anything to a belligerent except arms and ammunition. But it must also be remembered that there was no keener observer of the situation than France herself. She knew it all without the aid of the Adamses or the Laurenses. It had been her policy to wait to be asked and urged. She preferred to encourage the Americans to protect themselves if they could; and she would come to their assistance only if they were about to fail. It was a great crisis which everybody realized and to which the opinion of the whole civilized world, on one side or the other, contributed. Adams, in his frank way, at last admits that perhaps no one person could claim much part in it. "What a dust we raise, said the fly on the chariot wheel."<sup>2</sup>

A letter from Germain of the 7th of March, 1781, shows that at that time the Ministry was still living in a paradise of self-congratulation over what they deemed the immediate and sure success of the new plans of Cornwallis. They had heard of the mutiny of the Pennsylvania line and, while it had not been attended with all the good consequences they could wish, they were sure that it would have extensive effects in reducing "Mr. Washington's force" and preventing him from receiving recruits. They direct Clinton to send a force into Delaware, and they flatter themselves that all "the Southern Provinces will be recovered to His Majesty's Obedience" before the reinforcements they intend to send Clinton can reach him.

Mr. Washington, unable to draw subsistence for his troops from the west side of the Hudson, will be compelled, they say, to take refuge in New England. As for the progress Cornwallis was making in his invasion of North Carolina and Virginia, they felt sure that it would be "rapid and decisive; for His Lordship appeared to be fully impressed with the absolute necessity of vigorous exertions in the service of his coun-

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<sup>2</sup> Diplomatic Correspondence of the Revolution, vol. vi, pp. 202, 204; Parson, "Life of Franklin," vol. ii, p. 301; Secret Journal of Congress, vol. ii, pp. 408-414; Sumner, "Financier and Finances of the Revolution," vol. i, pp. 293-301.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

try in its present circumstances." Arnold's expedition into Virginia would certainly assist his Lordship and cut off Greene's recruits and supplies. "Indeed, so very contemptible is the Rebel force now in all parts, and so vast is our superiority everywhere, that no resistance on their part is to be apprehended that can materially obstruct the progress of the King's Arms in the Speedy Suppression of the Rebellion."

It seemed very strange to them that the rebellion had not been suppressed long ago, for they note that the loyalists "in the King's service are more in number than the whole of the enlisted troops in the service of the Congress."<sup>3</sup> No such hopeful and happy letter is to be found in any of the previous communications of the Ministry during the war. In short, at a time when the whole fabric of British military operations in America was being irretrievably wrecked by the folly of Lord Cornwallis, that nobleman had succeeded in persuading the Ministry that everything was pre-eminently successful. In the matter of completely deceiving the home government it must be confessed that His Lordship's abilities were very great. In his letters to the Ministry he describes his march through North Carolina as a grand triumphal progress, the Battle of Guilford Court House as a wonderful victory, and his retreat to Wilmington as a mere continuation of the triumphal progress.

Some time after writing his jubilant letter in March, Gormain heard of Tarleton's defeat at the Battle of the Cowpens, and he writes in April that the news of it was very depressing; but he had been reassured by receiving word from Cornwallis that this trifling accident had not interfered with the great design of invading North Carolina, which was still in progress.<sup>4</sup>

The great design was certainly still in progress. When Cornwallis drew Leslie and his force from Virginia down to South Carolina there was nothing for Clinton to do but to weaken himself still further in New York by sending another

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<sup>3</sup> B. F. Stevens, "Clinton-Cornwallis Controversy," vol. i, p. 334.

<sup>4</sup> B. F. Stevens, "Clinton-Cornwallis Controversy," vol. i, pp. 338, 355, 370, 380, 396.

## ARNOLD RAIDS VIRGINIA

force to Virginia; for had he not been ordered by the Ministry to support the projects of his subordinate in that State? He selected Arnold for the task, and this was the first service of the traitor as a British general.

With fifty sail of vessels and about fifteen hundred men Arnold entered the James River during the last weeks of December, 1780, and conducted a most vindictive and destructive raid as far as Richmond. Virginia, though the most populous and wealthy of the American states of that time, was unable to offer the slightest resistance. Her patriot party and patriot militia seem to have been without the slightest organization or ability to repel invasion. They were obliged to stand aside and submit as they had submitted to the raid of Matthews about eighteen months before. Virginia, as Harry Lee indignantly exclaimed, was "prostrate at the feet of a handful of men led by a traitor and deserter." Baron Steuben, who commanded the militia, had so few men that he could do no more than hang round the skirts of the raid; and Arnold, when satisfied, retired to Portsmouth opposite Norfolk and established himself securely. In his letters and reports to Clinton he now awkwardly affects that formalism and air of distinction which was the accepted tone among British officers.<sup>6</sup>

The Congress and the whole patriot party were so mortified at the condition to which Virginia was reduced by the traitor, that, as he was isolated there with a comparatively small force, Washington thought he might be captured if assistance could be obtained from the French fleet still blockaded in Rhode Island. The chance occurred on the 22nd of January, 1781, when, in a great storm, one of the British blockading vessels was lost and three others dismasted. More than a month would be required to repair the damage, and during that time the French fleet would be superior and able to go to sea.

Washington immediately started Lafayette with twelve hundred infantry to march by land to Virginia, and he urged the

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<sup>6</sup> B. F. Stevens, *id.*, pp. 79, 310; Henry Lee, *Memoirs*, vol. ii, pp. 1-18.



## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

French admiral to send his whole fleet with some of the French troops by sea. The admiral, however, had already sent three war vessels to the Chesapeake. They accomplished little or nothing, for Arnold was strongly fortified in Portsmouth. They captured some British vessels and brought to Newport the "Romulus" of forty-four guns. The worst effect of this little expedition was that by waiting for its return the great expedition of the whole fleet, in combination with Lafayette's land force, was delayed.

The great expedition of the whole fleet finally started in March, but the British had, meantime, repaired their war-ships and started in pursuit. The two fleets met and fought near the mouth of the Chesapeake on the sixteenth day of March; the British with eight ships and three frigates; the French under Des Touches, who had succeeded De Ternay, with the same number of ships but inferior in weight of metal. The British were pursuing, and the French turned to sail by them, the British at the same time turning, so that the two lines sailed parallel to each other exchanging broadsides. The French were to leeward; and it was an instance when the lee gage had the advantage. The wind was blowing hard, lifting the windward side of the French ships high out of the water, so that they could use their lower tier of guns, which were the heaviest, while the English ships, with their leeward sides buried in the water, could use only their upper tier of lighter guns. The engagement lasted only an hour, and was indecisive. The English were so badly crippled in their rigging that they declined further action. But the French made no attempt to follow up their advantage. They abandoned their expedition and returned to Newport, while the English went into the Chesapeake to make sure of the safety of Arnold.

Ill luck and delay had again attended our cause, and neither the patriots nor the French seemed able to accomplish anything. Lafayette, uncertain of support from the fleet, halted at Annapolis, and then fell back to the head of Chesapeake Bay. But Arnold, it is said, was very much alarmed. He felt as if the rope was already tightening round his neck; and Clinton, to

## VIRGINIA AGAIN RAIDED

save such a valuable deserter, sent to Virginia 2000 more troops under General Phillips. He promptly conducted another terrible raid in fresh territory, destroying all the property in Petersburg as well as enormous quantities of tobacco and patriot military supplies in other places. Except for the distinguished patriot leaders like Jefferson and Henry, who escaped this destruction, Virginia was reduced to a mere cipher in the patriot cause.<sup>6</sup>

Deeply disappointed and not knowing what next to expect, Washington again writes at this time that some capital change must soon take place, which will decide the conflict one way or the other. Everything now depended on the fleet from France and the loan of hard money. Without it the army could not be kept together during the rest of the campaign. It must disband to search for food. The provisions which had been collected in some of the States could not be hauled because there was no money to pay the teamsters, who would no longer work for certificates.<sup>7</sup>

Steuben, in command of the Virginia militia, had made a slight resistance to Phillips's raid, and Lafayette with his force from the North now arrived. But Phillips returned leisurely to Portsmouth with immense spoil for his officers to sell for their own profit, leaving behind him burning buildings and scenes of destruction which were hardly equalled in any other British raid during the war.

One object of this successful raiding was not accomplished. It did not help Cornwallis in the Carolinas. It is true that it stopped reinforcements going to the assistance of Greene in South Carolina; but the blunders of Cornwallis had already enabled Greene to break up all the interior British

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<sup>6</sup> Writings of Washington, vol. ix, pp. 210, 211, 191 note, 137, 144, 151, 160, 163, 165, 169, 201 and 231; B. P. Stevens, "Clinton-Cornwallis Controversy," vol. i, pp. 322, 325, 328, 330, 339 and 347; Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iv, pp. 50-52; Lee, Memoirs, vol. ii, pp. 18-30.

<sup>7</sup> Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. ix, pp. 212, 230, note; 242 and 245.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

posts in that State. Clinton's plans were thus entirely abrogated, and the plans of Cornwallis and the Ministry had not succeeded. Virginia had been raided to death and yet the Carolinas had not fallen. Cornwallis had said that they were dependent on Virginia and would fall with her; but there was evidently no connection of that kind; the British had lost the Carolinas and had not yet established themselves in Virginia.

Cornwallis, it will be remembered, after the Battle of Guilford Court House, had retreated down the Cape Fear River, and, although he could have returned to the defence of South Carolina, he preferred to keep on to Wilmington, nearly a hundred miles away on the coast. Having arrived there early in April, he left South Carolina completely to the mercy of Greene, and manufactured excuses for going up into Virginia.

In all discussions among military men, both patriot and British, it had been accepted as an axiom that Virginia could not be conquered by a British army unless that army was supported by a fleet occupying Chesapeake Bay, so as to enable provisions and reinforcements to reach the invading army from the sea. A covering fleet of this sort had been necessary for the conquest of South Carolina, and the British occupation of that state depended on the war vessels which were in possession of Charleston harbor. It was also accepted as equally clear that if a French fleet occupied the Chesapeake a British force in Virginia would be helpless and might be successfully attacked by a patriot land force.

But in the face of all this, and without the certainty of a covering fleet in the Chesapeake, Cornwallis, after remaining for two weeks at Wilmington, decided to invade Virginia with the remains of his army that had retreated from Guilford Court House; and he afterwards had the face to say that this move was the best way to save South Carolina.

If he remained at Wilmington, he said, Greene might defeat Lord Rawdon in South Carolina and then come up to attack Wilmington. If he went to South Carolina he could not help Rawdon and would himself be in danger if Rawdon was defeated. If, on the other hand, Rawdon were able to defend

## EXCUSES OF CORNWALLIS

himself, then Rawdon would save all that was valuable in South Carolina. He was also, he said, influenced by learning from the substance of a dispatch from Clinton sent up to him from Charleston, that Phillips had been sent to Virginia, "which," he says, "induced me to hope that solid operations might be adopted in that quarter; and I was most firmly persuaded that until Virginia was reduced we could not hold the more Southern provinces; and that after its reduction they would fall without much resistance and be retained without much difficulty."<sup>8</sup>

These reasons, or rather excuses, were afterwards treated by Clinton with such contempt, and such serious charges were made, that it is very strange that neither a court-martial nor a duel was the result. The dispatch about Phillips going to Virginia had been received by Colonel Balfour in command of Charleston on the 7th of April, and between that date and the twenty-fifth, when Cornwallis left Wilmington for Virginia, there was ample time for the whole dispatch, as well as the substance of it, to be sent to Cornwallis. The dispatch when read through as a whole was in effect a prohibition on Cornwallis going to Virginia, because it told him that a French fleet was in the Chesapeake, that Phillips had not yet gone there and that Clinton intended to withdraw nearly all the troops from Virginia. Cornwallis, Clinton charged, received this dispatch and knew its contents but decided to assert that he had never received it, engaged Balfour to keep silent, and concocted a "substance of the dispatch" to suit his purpose of going to Virginia where he hoped Clinton might come and resign to him the commandership-in-chief.<sup>9</sup>

This possibility of Clinton resigning needs further explana-

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<sup>8</sup> B. F. Stevens, "Clinton-Cornwallis Controversy," vol. i, pp. 69-70.

<sup>9</sup> B. F. Stevens, *id.*, vol. i, pp. 13 note, 70 note, 107 note, 109 note, 110 note, 111 note, 123 note, 341, 345, 393 note, 395 note. "I sometimes suspect," says Clinton, "that E. Cornwallis was determined to put himself within my reach under the idea that I was in temper to resign the command to him, and that he was blind to every other consideration." *Id.*, 109 note, 453 note.



## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

tion, and is a rather curious piece of history, revealing peculiar conditions in the British administration. We have several times referred to the great havoc the British navy was expected to work upon the American coast, the great dread the patriots had of it, and their surprise and delight when their expectations were not fulfilled. At the time of the siege of Boston there were great complaints among the British of the inefficiency of the admiral on the New England coast. When Admiral Howe took command there was another set of complaints which were ably set forth by Galloway, who charged Admiral Howe with utter supineness and unwillingness to take any active measures. In fact he seemed to be interested only in peace negotiations. When he passed from the command Clinton seems to have been troubled with a certain Admiral Arbuthnot who, if anything, was worse than the others. He was old, inconsistent, unreliable, of a bad temper, and so disobliging that Clinton could not obtain from him vessels for carrying messages, and had to organize for his own use a class of fast schooners which he called runners.

If Clinton had been supported in his raiding policy by an active and capable navy it is quite conceivable that his devastations on the Atlantic seaboard might have been too terrible for endurance. He was thoroughly disgusted at being crippled in this way and unable to undertake the enterprises he had planned; and he found, also, that the Ministry were not furnishing him with either the recruits or the provisions that had been promised. He was several times within a few days of a total failure of provisions for his army; and the failure to send him small arms kept him inactive when aggressive operations were needed. He had accordingly written to the Ministry for leave to resign; and leave to resign in favor of Cornwallis was granted him, to be exercised whenever he chose, but he was recommended "to remain in good humor in full confidence of being supported."<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> B. F. Stevens, "Clinton-Cornwallis Controversy," vol. i, pp. 448, 449, 390, 100 note, 452, 453 note, 454.



## CLINTON MISLED

He had at the same time asked that Admiral Arbuthnot should be recalled and a better officer put in his place; and expecting from week to week that this would be done he had not taken advantage of his permission to resign, believing that if he had a good admiral to assist him he could bring the Revolution to an end in favor of England. Cornwallis, he said, knew all these circumstances, and inflamed with ambition for the commandership-in-chief, and believing that Clinton would resign to him if he came near enough, he was constantly trying to work himself northward. Cornwallis was certainly Virginia mad; and we read in one of his letters, written to Clinton at this time, the astounding suggestion that the seat of war should be moved into Virginia, even at the expense of abandoning New York.

"I cannot help expressing my wishes that the Chesapeake may become the seat of war, even (if necessary) at the expense of abandoning New York." (B. F. Stevens, *id.*, vol. i, p. 300.)

An equally extraordinary part of the situation was that Clinton believed that the plans of Cornwallis had been crowned with complete success; that he had crushed Greene, conquered North Carolina, and all that was now necessary for him to do was to leave part of his force to garrison North Carolina and take the rest to Virginia or wherever they might be needed.<sup>11</sup>

So far from knowing that Guilford Court House was really a British disaster and that Greene was at that moment attacking and breaking up the British posts in South Carolina, Clinton supposed that Greene had fled northward from the victorious arms of Cornwallis. He was so convinced of the success of his subordinate's plans that he expected the Revolution to be closed by that subordinate's triumphal progress northward to New York.

"It is my wish that you should continue to conduct operations as they advance Northerly; for except as a visitor, I shall probably not

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<sup>11</sup> B. F. Stevens, *id.*, vol. i, pp. 406, 408.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

move to Chesapeake, unless Washington goes thither in great force. The success which has hitherto attended your Lordship excites the fullest assurance of its continuance; and as it is my inclination to assist your operations to the utmost extent of my power, I am convinced, from your disinterestedness, that you will not ask from me a larger proportion of troops than I can possibly spare." (B. F. Stevens, *id.*, p. 405.)

The Northern patriots appear to have been equally ignorant of the real situation. They thought that Greene had suffered a bad defeat, and they were as yet unable to appreciate the incompetence of Cornwallis or the extent to which he had crippled himself by his wanderings. Cornwallis was in no hurry to let his deplorable situation be known, and allowed the truth to leak out gradually. After arriving at Wilmington he wrote to Clinton describing his military operations of the winter as having been "uniformly successful," and his victory at Guilford as another wonder of the war, for with only sixteen hundred and sixty men he had completely beaten Greene who had seven thousand. He admits that the loyalists had not risen in as great numbers as he wished, but he gives the impression that much is to be expected, makes light of his retreat to Wilmington, gives no hint of his having lost North Carolina, and at the close of the letter makes that extraordinary suggestion that it might be well to abandon New York and move the seat of war to Virginia.<sup>12</sup>

Clinton's suspicions were somewhat aroused by this letter and, in his reply on the 30th of April, he says that he is surprised at the statement of the numbers at the Battle of Guilford Court House, and does not quite understand them. He is also evidently puzzled to know how it could happen that after such a marvellous victory the conqueror had to retreat so far and hide himself in Wilmington merely as "a place of rest and refitment." But, although he sees that the situation is not so easy as he at first supposed, his letter is in the usual elevated tone of confidence and respect for an officer, who, though a subordinate, is a member of the aristocracy. He still appar-

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<sup>12</sup> B. F. Stevens, "Clinton-Cornwallis Controversy," vol. i, pp. 395-399; Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. ix, pp. 201, 204, 220.

## THE TRUTH LEAKS OUT

ently believes that Cornwallis has a substantial foothold and a prospect of successful operations.<sup>13</sup>

General Phillips in Virginia was also laboring under the same delusion and enjoying some evidence he had just received of the speedy break-up of both the patriot party and the patriot army in the North.

"I cannot," he writes to Clinton on the 16th of April, "sufficiently express my extreme joy at reading Washington's (intercepted) letter. It is such a description of distress, as may serve to convince that with a tolerable reinforcement from Europe, to enable your Excellency to determine on an offensive campaign, the year 1781 may probably prove the glorious period of your command in America, by putting an end to the rebellion." (B. F. Stevens, *id.*, p. 407.)

Phillips had a slight suspicion that the triumph of Cornwallis might not perhaps be quite so glorious as it seemed, for he writes to Clinton, "forgive me for thinking that he may have bought it dear and that his lordship remained a little crippled after the action." But very soon in the same letter his confidence returns and he speaks of sweeping the country northward and driving Lafayette from Baltimore; "in which case Maryland and the Susquehanna to Yorktown (York?) and from thence back to Frederick Town on the Potowmack with that river would in a degree be in our power." Arnold was also deceived and joined with Phillips in plans for conquering Maryland which, they thought, would be accomplished by the end of May, and then they could sweep on to Philadelphia.

A few days afterwards, however, Phillips learned the real truth and threw up the sponge. The supposed glorious success of Cornwallis was, he says, "that sort of victory which ruins an army and the Carolinas, like all America, are lost in rebellion."<sup>14</sup>

When Clinton finally learned the truth, when he learned

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<sup>13</sup> B. F. Stevens, *id.*, pp. 441-445, also 458.

<sup>14</sup> B. F. Stevens, "Clinton-Cornwallis Controversy," vol. i, pp. 400, 411, 412 and 413.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

that the victories and triumphal progress of Cornwallis were mere shams and his Lordship's glowing reports of them were fabrications and phrase-making, his indignation knew no bounds; and his attacks on Cornwallis in the controversy that followed have seldom been equalled for venom and persistency. He tried to have Cornwallis court-martialled. He also, it is said, intended to force him to a duel and refrained only because of his Lordship's subsequent misfortune.<sup>15</sup>

On the eighteenth day of April Cornwallis was still keeping up appearances at Wilmington and writing to the Ministry that he was about to take the field again, and that South Carolina would take care of itself. North Carolina he cautiously admits had been something of a disappointment. It was so cut up with rivers and creeks that it was hard to reduce by a direct attack; but he would now conquer it in an indirect and scientific way by invading Virginia.

Four days after writing this letter he received a hurried message from Charleston that Greene's army had entered South Carolina, would very likely take Camden, and that the other interior posts would probably have to be abandoned. But he would not go to the rescue, for fear, he said, that Greene might "hem me in among the great rivers and by cutting off our subsistence render our arms useless." He preferred to go as far away from Greene as possible into the back parts of Virginia, which, he naively says, Greene had "left open;" and there his "little corps" would join General Phillips and be safe. South Carolina he hopes will not suffer severely; and he has the greatest confidence in the distinguished ability of its defenders Lord Rawdon and Colonel Balfour.<sup>16</sup>

The next day, after further reflection on the situation, he was thoroughly scared, and writes to Phillips for sympathy.

"Dear Phillips: My situation here is very distressing. Greene took the advantage of my being obliged to come to this place and has marched to South Carolina." (B. F. Stevens, *id.*, p. 420.)

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<sup>15</sup> Fonblanque, "Life of Burgoyne," p. 400, note.

<sup>16</sup> B. F. Stevens, *id.*, vol. i, pp. 414, 415, 418-426.



## MORE EXCUSES

Greene had certainly been very inconsiderate, and Cornwallis now announced that Lord Rawdon's posts in South Carolina are in "the greatest danger of being beat in detail." But he cannot go to help Rawdon, for "should he have fallen my army would be exposed to the utmost danger from the great rivers I should have to pass, the exhausted state of the country, the numerous militia, the almost universal spirit of revolt which prevails in South Carolina, and the strength of Greene's army, whose continentals alone are at least as numerous as I am."

He was now seeing everything double. He magnified Greene's army, and said that mountaineers and militia were pouring into the back part of South Carolina; and at the same time he declares that on his way from Guilford Court House to Wilmington he had sent a special warning to Rawdon of the likelihood of just such a movement by Greene. But he does not explain why, when he knew of this probable danger, he did not then go to the assistance of Rawdon, who was nearer to him than Wilmington.

It was a strange situation that the fate of the Revolution and the British Empire in America depended upon this incompetent general, who, by his accidental victory over Gates, had been able to dictate a new policy to a British Ministry and upset the plans of the commander-in-chief. Cornwallis possessed such political influence in England that he never could be called to account for what he was doing, and an accomplished officer like Clinton was completely at his mercy.

He begs Phillips to be ready to receive him near Petersburg in Virginia, for he intends to march towards Hillsboro in North Carolina to see if that will withdraw Greene from his prey. If it does not he will try to go to Petersburg to dear Phillips; and if he cannot do that he will return to Wilmington to transport his troops by water to Charleston.

At one time he is said to have been on the point of going back to South Carolina, and some of his troops had started. But he recalled them, and on the 25th of April started in the opposite direction for Virginia. He spent nearly a month in reaching Petersburg, arriving there on the twentieth of May



## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

to find that General Phillips, who had brought his force to that place, had died a few days before. Cornwallis was now in command of Virginia, the key to the South, as he had so often called it. But on the 26th of May he writes to Clinton confessing utter weakness, and the complete failure of the past winter's campaign, which a month before he had described as "uniformly successful." North Carolina is lost, he says, and the interior of South Carolina is also probably lost.<sup>17</sup>

He repeats his old suggestion "that if offensive war is intended, Virginia appears to me to be the only province in which it can be carried on." But he adds that a considerable army will be necessary for that purpose. What he intends to do, he says, is to drive Lafayette from Richmond, raid the patriot stores and then take a position at Williamsburg. But it would be endless to give all the instances of his marvellous inconsistencies and confusion of judgment. In a subsequent letter to the Ministry he seems to feel safer, puts on a bolder tone, and exulting in what he considers his superiority over Lafayette says, "the boy cannot escape me."

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<sup>17</sup> B. F. Stevens, *id.*, pp. 426, 487-491; Lee, *Memoirs*, vol. ii, p. 41.

## CI.

### CORNWALLIS RETIRES TO YORKTOWN

THE Ministry and the King were still rejoicing over the wonderful success in the South and the approaching end of the American Rebellion. They were extolling "the glorious victory of Guilford Court House," and were in raptures over Cornwallis's brilliant conquest of North Carolina, which Germain wrote him had become "matter of astonishment to all Europe." The only doubt was whether Clinton would have sufficient capacity and sense to give proper support to this new and shining genius that had been found among his subordinates. The war was now to be pushed from South to North, "securing what is conquered as we go, and not by desultory enterprises taking possession of places at one time and abandoning them at another."<sup>1</sup>

The new and shining genius was now making a great show about driving "the boy" Lafayette from Richmond. It was easy to do, for Lafayette's mobile troops either kept out of the way of the British general, or followed him as he marched through Hanover County and crossed the South Anna River, while the patriot legislature and the Governor fled to Charlottesville in the interior of the state.

In this new march of devastation through Virginia, Cornwallis collected a number of fine saddle horses from the plantations and mounted a considerable body of his troops whom Tarleton and Simcoe took on a raid to the westward. They destroyed twelve wagon loads of clothing on the way to Greene in South Carolina, and also large quantities of the Virginia patriot supplies, powder, salt, harness, one thousand stand of arms, two thousand hogsheads of tobacco and a large number

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<sup>1</sup> B. F. Stevens, "Clinton-Cornwallis Controversy," vol. ii, pp. 7, 13, 16 note.

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*of cannon, mortars and howitzers. It was another blow to the wealth and resources of Virginia; and, if mere raids could conquer her, she was now surely conquered. If Cornwallis had had force enough, or if the loyalists had been sufficiently numerous for him to establish British civil government with a colonial governor and legislature, as had been done in Georgia, the British Parliament might have announced that another American republic had become a colony of the empire.*

Tarleton and Simcoe penetrated to Charlottesville where they captured seven members of the patriot legislature, while the rest with Governor Jefferson fled to Staunton in the western mountains. The army which Burgoyne had surrendered at Saratoga had been imprisoned at Charlottesville, and it was hurried north into Pennsylvania in time to be saved from rescue by the dashing Tarleton.

In this raid Tarleton seized a number of the prominent inhabitants, and those who were pronounced patriots he kept with him as prisoners, treating them, he says, "with kindness and liberality." In conversations on public affairs "they generally and separately," he said, "avowed, that if England could prevent the intended cooperation of the French fleet and army with the American forces during the ensuing autumn, both Congress and the country would gladly dissolve the French alliance, and enter into treaty with Great Britain." This shows how well known among the patriots was the expected coming of the French fleet under De Grasse, and how much was believed to depend on it, and also that Virginia, like some other parts of the country, was so depressed by Clinton's terrible raiding of the last few years that prominent patriots were preparing for a compromise.<sup>2</sup>

Baron Steuben, who was on the borders of North Carolina on his way with some five hundred patriot troops to reinforce Greene, was now recalled, and on the 7th of June Wayne came

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<sup>2</sup> B. F. Stevens, *id.*, vol. ii, p. 32; Tarleton, *Narrative*, pp. 206, 207; Lee, *Memoirs*, vol. ii, pp. 206-211; Stedman, "American War," vol. ii, pp. 390-392.

## CORNWALLIS RETREATS

down from the North with eight hundred reinforcements for Lafayette. Cornwallis attempted to prevent the junction of Wayne and Lafayette, and, failing in that, hurried towards Albemarle Old Court House, to which some valuable military stores had been moved from Richmond. But to his great surprise he suddenly found that Lafayette had passed ahead of him by an old unused road, which the patriots reopened in the night, and planted himself in a strong position between his Lordship and the supplies.

His Lordship became suddenly unwilling to continue his conquest of Virginia. He withdrew all his raids and fell back some fifty miles to Richmond. On the 18th of June he sallied out of Richmond and quickly returned again. On the 20th he abandoned Richmond, apparently dreading the reinforcements of Steuben and Wayne which the "boy" had received, and retreated down the James River to Williamsburg, where he fortified himself and received reinforcements from the British garrison at Portsmouth. Arnold had returned to New York. Cornwallis was in full command in Virginia with double the numbers of Lafayette, and in the opinion of military critics could, by steady pursuit, have forced Lafayette to action and defeated him. But so far from doing this he was trying to keep out of "the boy's" way.

Clinton had been so weakened by the troops sent South to assist the magnificent schemes of conquest, that Washington and Rochambeau were threatening to attack New York. On the morning after Cornwallis arrived at Williamsburg he received dispatches from Clinton, asking him to spare, if possible, some troops to help protect New York, and putting a very decided negative on his wild plans for transferring the seat of war to Virginia.

To suppose that Clinton would abandon New York and go to Virginia was, of course, preposterous. But when Cornwallis found it was not to be done, that there was to be no great invasion in force into Virginia, with himself in command, and that he might have to send away some of his men to help protect New York, he dropped into a fit of the sulks and wrote

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to Clinton that Virginia might as well be abandoned altogether, there was no use in holding a small defensive post in such a sickly country, and he himself was willing to go back to Charleston. On which Clinton made the very natural comment, that, "after doing all the mischief he could, the good Earl is willing to leave me the responsibility."<sup>3</sup>

The good Earl had hardly settled himself in his strong position at Williamsburg, when he decided to leave it. On the 4th of July he abandoned the town and prepared to cross the James River for the purpose of retreating to Portsmouth opposite Norfolk. He retreated to the site of Jamestown, where the famous Captain John Smith made the first English settlement in Virginia. Wayne and his Pennsylvanians pressed close upon the British rear; and Tarleton sent to them a negro and a dragoon, who professing to be deserters, informed them that the main British army had crossed and that only a rear guard was left. According to the patriot account Lafayette and Wayne were deceived, not by this ruse, but by their own observations, and pressing closer, soon found themselves confronted by the whole British army, which they attacked boldly as the only means of extricating themselves. A severe action was fought at close range. Lafayette directed his troops in the front of the battle and had two horses shot under him. The fighting lasted until sunset, when the Americans retreated, losing some of their cannon. It was a courageous and lucky escape on the part of Lafayette and Wayne. The engagement derives the name of the Battle of Greenspring from the old Berkeley mansion near which it was fought. No pursuit was made because Cornwallis feared an ambuscade in the darkness, and he would not pursue at dawn, because it would delay him sending away the troops, which Clinton had called for to help protect New York.

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<sup>3</sup> B. F. Stevens, *id.*, vol. i, p. 487, vol. ii, pp. 33-39; Tarleton, *Narrative*, pp. 400, 405; Lee, *Memoirs*, vol. ii, pp. 194-200, 213-222, 232. Clinton at this time withdrew from Cornwallis the permission to correspond directly with the Ministry. *Id.*, p. 16 and notes.



## RETREAT TO PORTSMOUTH

The next morning, Tarleton, who rode out with his dragoons, reported Lafayette's force only six miles away, completely exhausted by their long march and hard battle of the day before and offering themselves an easy prey to the British. But Cornwallis, to Tarleton's great disgust, continued his retreat to Portsmouth, which with the forty-five hundred he brought to it contained now about seven thousand men. He missed, it is supposed, a great opportunity to crush Lafayette. He might have renewed on the lawns of Greenspring, says Lee, the catastrophe of Gates at Camden; "a second patriot army would have been annihilated, and that too when on its fate hung the safety of Virginia, of the South, if not of the United States."<sup>4</sup>

But after all Cornwallis might not have found Lafayette and Wayne as easy to handle as Tarleton supposed. Clinton was much disturbed when he heard that Cornwallis had abandoned Williamsburg. He called it a "mortifying move" and began to criticise the whole policy of Cornwallis, who replied that the retreat was very mortifying, but that Williamsburg was not a harbor and would require a much larger army than his to protect it. Yorktown near by, though a harbor, would, he said, require great time and labor to fortify, and therefore he had fallen down to Portsmouth whence he could send some of his troops to Clinton to help protect New York.<sup>5</sup>

The excuses may have been plausible, but it was evident that the "genius" of Cornwallis was failing and going from bad to worse. Harry Lee, who up to this time had insisted on regarding him as one of the ablest of the British generals, now abandoned all belief in his capacity and marked him as a hopeless failure.

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<sup>4</sup> Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iv, pp. 107, 118, 185; Lee, *Memoirs*, vol. ii, pp. 222-230, 234; Stillé, "Life of Wayne," p. 269; B. F. Stevens, "Clinton-Cornwallis Controversy," vol. ii, pp. 58, 74, 106, 109, 119, 130, 136; Tarleton, *Narrative*, pp. 353-356, 400-403; Tower, "Life of Lafayette," vol. ii, chap. 26.

<sup>5</sup> B. F. Stevens, "Clinton-Cornwallis Controversy," vol. ii, pp. 74, 106, 109, 119, 130 and 136.

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Praise for Lafayette was heard on all sides. On his arrival the Virginians had been aghast at his youth; but now they could not say enough for his zeal, courage and sagacity, the cheerfulness which had driven out despondency, and the high tone and energy he had inspired in the country and in his little army. With hardly three thousand men he had, by caution, quickness and skilful manœuvring, tired out a British general with forty-five hundred, and compelled him to seek some place of protection.<sup>6</sup>

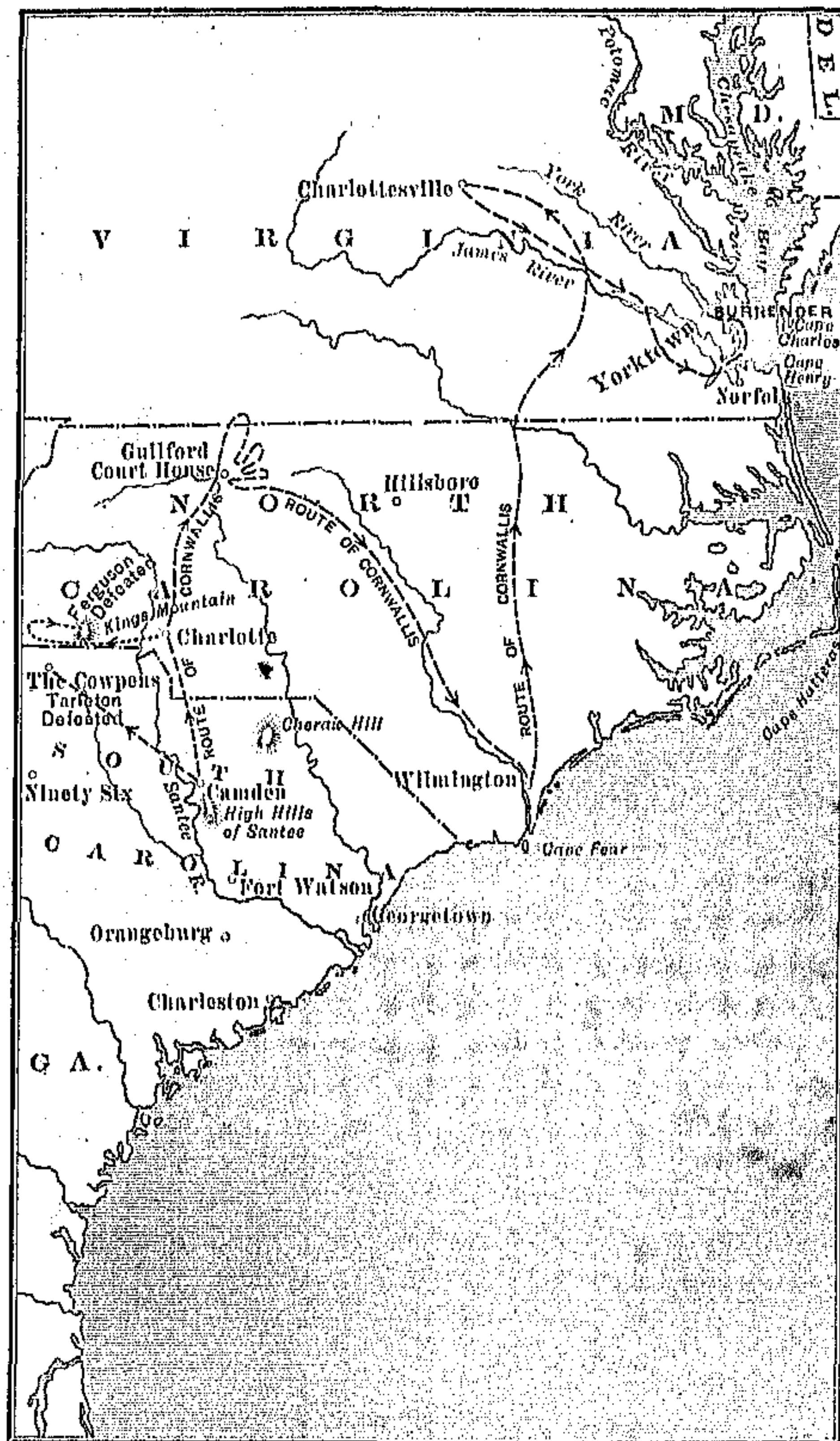
On his choice of a place of protection a great deal depended. It was, of course, a necessary part of any sort of British occupation of Virginia, that there should be a strongly fortified headquarters, or place of arms as it was called, like Charleston in South Carolina. It was part of the obvious duty of Cornwallis to select such a place. It must be upon the water, with a good harbor, where British war vessels would be protected by forts, and supplies could be brought in from the sea; and it must also be so situated that operations could be easily conducted from it for controlling the interior of the state. If such operations could not be conducted, the place must be well defended against attacks on the land side, and should afford the war vessels an opportunity of making themselves masters of Chesapeake Bay. The utility and existence of such a place would of course depend on the British having a naval superiority in those waters, and this naval superiority was the essential point on which the whole question of conquering or occupying Virginia depended; for without that naval superiority the British army could be locked up and starved by a hostile fleet on the water, and a hostile army in their rear on the land.<sup>7</sup>

In South Carolina it had been, of course, very easy to select the headquarters or place of arms, because Charleston was so

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<sup>6</sup> Lee, *Memoirs*, vol. ii, pp. 233, 234; Durand, "New Materials for History of Revolution," p. 242.

<sup>7</sup> Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iv, p. 185; B. F. Stevens, "Clinton-Cornwallis Controversy," vol. i, pp. 7, 9, 11, 12, 17, 18, 32, 41, 70, 115, 121, 370, 300, 403, 404, 412, 452 and notes.



MAP SHOWING THE WANDERING CAMPAIGN OF CORNWALLIS FROM CAMDEN TO YORKTOWN

(100-104104)

## OLD POINT REJECTED

obviously the naval stronghold of that state. But in Virginia, cut up into a number of narrow necks of land by the great rivers of Chesapeake Bay, there was no one harbor which gave easy access by land to the rest of the state. There was a chance for much difference of opinion as to the position that should be taken. Leslie and Arnold had occupied Portsmouth opposite Norfolk on the Elizabeth River as the best place; but it was unhealthy, hard to defend, afforded no protection for large war vessels, and Arnold and Phillips were not inclined to think well of it. Mill Point, a little lower down the Elizabeth, was thought more practicable; and Clinton and Phillips finally inclined to Old Point Comfort as the best of all.

The advantages of Old Point were explained in an interesting letter by General Phillips, who said that it was a post that a small force might defend on the land, and as it was directly on the bay, close to the ocean, the shipping would have ample scope to act, and by taking advantage of winds and tides might escape from a superior naval force. But up a river like the Elizabeth, the shipping would have no chance to escape, could be blockaded by a hostile naval force, and compelled to surrender with the post.

After establishing himself at Portsmouth, Cornwallis went down to examine Old Point, taking with him an engineer and four naval captains. They all decided against it; and their principal reason was that the water in front being deep for a distance of fifteen hundred yards, hostile ships could pass without being injured by the forts. The ground was so low that material for building forts would have to be brought a great distance at great expense. The forts when built would, they thought, give no protection to a weak fleet against a superior one, which could easily place the weaker fleet between itself and the forts.<sup>8</sup>

Every decision Cornwallis now made was momentous; and in August he abandoned Portsmouth and moved his whole

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<sup>8</sup> B. F. Stevens, *id.*, vol. ii, pp. 50 note; 53, 54, 62 note, 75, 96, 100, 102, 107; Tarleton, *Narrative*, p. 407.



## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

force to Yorktown, which, like Portsmouth, was up a river which could be closed by a hostile fleet. It was on the south bank of the York River and immediately opposite was Gloucester Point, which extended so far into the wide stream that the distance across the water was reduced to about a mile. The town and the Point completely commanded the broad reach of the river below; but they constituted a position so extensive that it was not an easy one to defend, as Cornwallis had pointed out some weeks before in a letter to Clinton.

"Upon viewing York I was clearly of the opinion that it far exceeds our Power consistent with your plans to make a safe defensive Fort there and at Gloucester, both of which would be necessary for the protection of shipping." (B. F. Stevens, "Clinton-Cornwallis Controversy," vol. II, pp. 35-36.)

It was characteristic of his irresponsible character and confused mind that he now reversed this decision, and in defending himself for going there described it as,—

"The only harbor in the Chesapeake that I knew of then, or indeed that I have heard of since, in which line of battle ships can be received and protected against a superior naval force, and as the harbor was the indispensable object, I thought it unnecessary to enter into a description of the disadvantage of the ground against a land attack, since there remained no other choice." (B. F. Stevens, *id.*, vol. I, p. 74.)

In other words, this conqueror of Virginia frankly admitted that he had chosen a place that was open to attack on the land side; and as an excuse he gave the peculiar reason that he supposed this was an unimportant matter, because the great point was to have a harbor in which naval vessels could be protected. But even as a place for protecting naval vessels he was utterly mistaken in it, as he was in almost everything else; for nearly all the ships he afterwards placed there, except those he deliberately sank, were destroyed by the American batteries from the land.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> See a passage in Lee's Memoirs, vol. II, p. 324, in which he explains that the best position for Cornwallis to have taken would have been on the south side of the James River at City Point, which would have afforded an easy retreat in case of necessity to North Carolina.

## CII.

### THE ATTACK UPON NEW YORK CHANGED TO AN ATTACK UPON YORKTOWN

IN the spring of 1781, when Cornwallis wrecked the British policy in America, England received another blow from the Spaniards who took the town and fort at Pensacola, which restored to Spain what was then known as West Florida. A second French expedition to take the island of Jersey in the English Channel was unsuccessful and surrendered after the commanders on both sides had been slain. A British detachment in India was destroyed; and a British expedition to take the Dutch settlements at the Cape of Good Hope failed of its purpose by the timely intervention of a French squadron<sup>1</sup>

England was intently watching the Dutch, determined, if possible, to destroy both their navy and their commerce. The Dutch had a great trade to the Baltic whence they not only procured naval stores for their war-ships and merchant marine, but a large supply of other commodities which they carried to Southern Europe. In July a large fleet of Dutch merchant vessels, convoyed by Admiral Zoutman with eight ships of the line, ten frigates and five sloops sailed from the Texel. It was met upon the Dogger Bank on the 5th of August, 1781, by a slightly inferior British fleet under Admiral Hyde Parker, to whom had been specially committed the duty of watching for the enemy in these waters.

Both fleets ordered their convoys out of the way; and then, without any manœuvring assailed each other at close range, in one of "those dreadful sea fights," as Burke calls it, which showed the intensity of hatred between the English and

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<sup>1</sup> Stedman, "American War," vol. ii, pp. 200-315; *Annual Register*, 1782, chap. v.

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the Dutch. Some of the English ships fired 2500 shot. The cannonade continued for three hours and forty minutes; and at the end of that time, the vessels on both sides were so ruined that they lay like logs upon the water, incapable of answering either helm or sail sufficiently to keep them within fighting distance. Neither side could renew the engagement and each claimed the victory. But the Dutch, it seems, suffered more damage. Two of their ships afterwards sank, and their merchant convoy fled home and abandoned the Baltic voyage for that year.<sup>2</sup>

The English regretted that they had not been able to make the stroke so signal and fatal that Holland would have at once sued for peace and been removed from the number of enemies that were threatening to overwhelm Great Britain. In the closeness and strain of her world-wide contest England was fighting with Anglo-Saxon tenacity and courage, but she was barely holding her own. The odds were so heavy and the margin for success so narrow that she could hardly endure the result of such mistakes as Cornwallis was making. Any additional misfortunes would break her defence and raise the question whether she must not surrender one of her three groups of possessions, India, the West Indies, or America. She might have to abandon one of them in order to retain the other two.

At this same critical time the fortunes of the American patriots had reached their lowest ebb. In May, 1781, the paper money of the Continental Congress came to an end. It could be circulated no longer; and this event marked the total bankruptcy of the patriot cause; an event which the English had always expected would end the war; and it might have ended it if Clinton's military situation had not suddenly failed.

Beginning in June, 1775, the continental paper money had been issued from time to time to the amount of over \$240,000,000. That sum, though steadily depreciating, had dragged the patriot cause through six years of war, a fact which must be remembered to the credit of the paper money in spite of the

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<sup>2</sup> *Annual Register*, 1782, chap. v, pp. 119-123.

## A SPECIE BASIS SUGGESTED

ruin and poverty it caused. Its effect on the people had been most demoralizing. They were encouraged in the wildest speculation and discouraged in thrift and honesty. The penal laws to enforce its acceptance, at par, were turned into engines of oppression and wrong. "It enervated the trade, husbandry and manufactures of our country and went far to destroy the morality of our people."<sup>3</sup>

"Old debts were paid when the paper money was more than seventy for one. Brothers defrauded brothers, children, parents and parents, children. Widows, orphans and others were paid for money lent in specie, with depreciated paper which they were compelled to take."

Many of Washington's investments in Virginia had been paid off in the worthless stuff, and from a wealthy man he had become a poor one, until at last even his sterling patriotism revolted, and he refused to accept the paper money in payment of anything. The question then arose, in this spring of 1781, how the cause was to be carried on and the mutinying, starving soldiers to be kept in the field, to take advantage of the mistakes of Cornwallis. Robert Morris came forward with the bold suggestion that the finances of the Congress be put at once on a specie basis and everything paid for in gold and silver.

Morris had been in the Congress for many years; had acted as their banker and merchant, and had carried on their trade in flour, tobacco and other commodities by which they tried to support the cause and obtain hard money and military equipment from Europe. At the same time he carried on his own business of a merchant of those times, dealing in cargoes all over the world, taking advantage of war prices and opportunities, and taking shares in privateers that came in with rich plunder. He had become very prosperous, as was the case with many of the mercantile and speculative classes who took advantage of the conditions brought about by the war. No man's credit and ability in money matters were higher. He had been

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<sup>3</sup> Phillips, "The Paper Currency of the Revolution;" *Magazine of American History*, vol. xi, pp. 164-167; Bolles, "Financial History of the United States," 1774-1789, chaps. ix-xvi.

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in the Pennsylvania legislature where, for a long time, he had opposed, as unsound, absurd and impossible, the attempt to keep up the paper money of the state by means of penalties to regulate prices and compel the acceptance of the paper money at par. It would be difficult to find in history a more remarkable instance of such a thorough-going hard money man in the midst of circumstances so overwhelmingly against him. The large majority of the patriot party had always believed in the paper money, believed that it could be kept sufficiently near par by penalties, and that the patriot cause could not be kept alive without it.

It had long been evident that the finances of the Congress should be in the control of one man, instead of being managed by a committee. In 1778 the Congress had offered the position to an English Whig, Dr. Richard C. Price, the author of numerous pamphlets on economic and political subjects, but he declined. They now in desperation gave it to Morris with the privilege of continuing his own commercial business and with full power to appoint and dismiss his subordinates.

Samuel Adams strenuously protested, as he had protested against what he considered the exaltation of Washington. But Morris went on in his jovial, confident way to put the cause on a specie basis at the moment of its greatest depression. The principal feature of his undertaking was the establishment of the Bank of North America, still in existence in Philadelphia, which was to be the financial institution of the patriot cause, lend money to the government and carry on its business on a hard money basis. This was all very well in theory; but where was the hard money to be obtained at this most hopeless period of the war?

Morris had three sources for obtaining it: First, he intended making the bank a place of deposit and concentration of what little specie there was in the country, and for this purpose asked all the prominent men in the whole patriot party to subscribe any specie they happened to have. But this source, as was naturally to be expected, produced very little. Second, in the absence of money some of the states had been paying the



## NECESSITY OF FRENCH AID

trifling amounts they furnished the patriot cause in flour, provisions and any goods they could obtain; these Morris with his knowledge of trade tried to sell in the West Indies or other foreign ports for cash; but this also amounted to very little. Third, was the great loan of specie from France, which Colonel Laurens had been sent to bring over; and this alone saved Morris's plan from utter failure.<sup>4</sup>

The methods of Cornwallis had laid open every British position in America to attack. But the patriots could take no advantage of the opportunity. Their continental paper currency was dead and useless; the currency of the different states was nearly in the same condition; the army under Washington was small, starving and mutinous; the French army and fleet were still locked up at Newport and doing nothing to assist the patriots. The patriots would still be ruined unless they obtained two things: the loan of specie from France and another French fleet and army, strong enough to liberate the one locked up in Newport and with it concentrate a heavy blow on one of the three English positions, at New York, Yorktown, or Charleston.

In his last blunder of establishing himself at Yorktown, Cornwallis had almost reached the limit of his incapacity. He could make only one more mistake and that was to continue to hold Yorktown. The condition to which he had reduced the British military situation was very clearly shown by Clinton when he recapitulated the forces he had furnished Cornwallis, in obedience to the orders of the Ministry to support him. He had left him in South Carolina in the summer of 1780 with five thousand men; he sent him three thousand more under Leslie, two thousand five hundred under Arnold, three thousand under Phillips and a final reinforcement of fifteen hundred, making in all fifteen thousand. Of this goodly army, Cornwallis had lost not a few in battle, and the rest he had

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<sup>4</sup> Oberholtzer's "Robert Morris," pp. 93-150, 169; *Magazine of American History*, vol. xi, p. 442 note, vol. xii, p. 77; Sumner, "Financier and Finances of the American Revolution," vol. i, pp. 198, 206, 207, 208, 258, 270.

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now distributed in widely separated detachments in various parts of South Carolina and Virginia, each detachment, including the one he commanded in person, so weak that it could not only take no aggressive action, but was incapable of protecting itself. When Washington first heard of the beginning of the Cornwallis methods he expressed the greatest satisfaction. "By spreading themselves out," he said, "as they are now doing, they will render themselves vulnerable everywhere."

It is doubtful if there can be found in all military history another instance of such systematic blundering or such an extreme violation of the elementary rule against weakening an army by detachments. Washington was often subject to this temptation, which in those times seems to have so easily beset commanders, of covering this point and that point by detachments until the whole army was spread out beyond control. But, except possibly in the instance of Barren Hill, he always carefully avoided this road to ruin.<sup>5</sup>

Some of the widely separated detachments of Cornwallis had already been beaten in detail in South Carolina, and he had drawn reinforcements from New York until the British defence of that town was seriously weakened, and the patriots were thinking of attacking it. The whole British position in America, from having been very strong, had within a year become so weak that one vigorous blow by the patriots and French would break it up.

During the winter and far into the spring the patriots had not been able to learn enough of recent events in the South to see how easy the situation was being made for them. But towards the end of May, Washington became convinced that New York had been so weakened by detachments to the South that it might be taken by a combined attack of Americans and French. In the last week of May he went to Weathersfield, Connecticut, to meet General Rochambeau of the French army, which had lain so long in Rhode Island. Fresh dis-

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<sup>5</sup> Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. vii, pp. 134, 136, 190, 212, 404, 405, vol. viii, p. 495 notes; vol. ix, p. 345.

## ALLIES MOVE ON NEW YORK

patches, as well as a new commodore, Count de Barras, had recently arrived from France, and Washington proposed to the French an attack upon New York, to which the French officers agreed, provided a larger naval force arrived from France.

Washington put forth his utmost exertions to collect a sufficient force. Letters were written to the New England States and New Jersey to have six thousand militia in readiness; and on the second of July he took a large part of his army down the east bank of the Hudson towards New York. A detachment of fifteen hundred from the British army at first opposed his advance, but soon fell back to their defences at Kingsbridge. On the sixth of July, while the army lay at White Plains, the French under Rochambeau joined them, a signal event in the Revolution, for although France had been our ally for more than three years, and had had an army and fleet in Rhode Island for nearly a year, this was the first occasion that French troops had appeared in the field prepared for battle.

Washington labored to inspire every one with his belief that there was now a great opportunity. Some fifteen hundred French troops had recently arrived at Boston, and these were on their way to join him. He expected that the French fleet would assail the British war-ships in New York harbor, and the patriot and French armies would march down Manhattan Island driving the outposts back upon the town and end the war; for, if New York and its commander-in-chief were taken, the British in Charleston and Cornwallis in Virginia might be easily disposed of.

In July the Ministry and the King, to their utter disgust, discovered how Cornwallis had been deceiving them. Germain hurriedly wrote to Clinton, on the seventh and again on the fourteenth of July, reversing all the former orders about supporting the plans of Cornwallis, and heartily approving Clinton's plan of invading Delaware, supporting the loyalists there, and in that way recovering the South. Germain is evidently in much alarm lest Clinton should have resigned his

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command to Cornwallis, and he is begged not to do so; that everything will be made satisfactory for him; that the impractical old Admiral Arbuthnot has already been recalled; a better admiral sent out; and hereafter Clinton would not be troubled by lack of provisions; and "will never again experience so cruel a state of anxiety as that in which you were left when your resources for supplying the army were so nearly exhausted."<sup>o</sup>

This was in the end a very gratifying vote of confidence for Clinton. But even if he had received the letters on the days when they were written, it was too late to accomplish anything, and he never actually received them until the tenth of September.

Meanwhile, having no orders or authority to change the unfortunate situation which Cornwallis had created, he turned his attention to the possibility of destroying the patriot supplies in Philadelphia, and wrote to Cornwallis about it.

"There, my Lord, are collected their principal depots of stores for the campaign, an immense quantity of European and West India commodities, and no inconsiderable supply of money, which their uninterrupted trade and cruisers have lately procured them; and from these funds they are now forming a Bank by subscription, which if it succeeds may give fresh vigor to their cause. Could we, therefore, at this moment seize those important magazines, upset their schemes and break up their public credit, the favorable consequences resulting from such success are too obvious to need explanation." (B. F. Stevens, *id.*, vol. ii, p. 22; see also p. 29.)

But Clinton's intelligent plans were wasted on Cornwallis. All July and most of August passed with the Americans and French encamped north of the Harlem River threatening New York, but making no attack upon it; for there was not yet the naval superiority which the French thought necessary. Clinton had intercepted in New Jersey some of Washington's letters describing his intention to attack New York. But independently of this the British general had ample time to prepare

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<sup>o</sup> B. F. Stevens, *id.*, vol. ii, pp. 46, 47, 60, 72, 86, 180; vol. i, p. 466.

## NEW YORK PLAN ABANDONED

for the defence of New York, and he began to withdraw troops from Cornwallis for that purpose, and also received a reinforcement of Hessians from Europe.

Washington saw that there was but little hope of taking the town. In fact it is doubtful if there ever had been any chance of taking it. To have the French fleet attack the harbor while the combined American and French troops rushed upon the town from the north by way of Kingsbridge, was a very brilliant and dramatic plan, promising to produce one of the remarkable battles of the world. But the French naval officers had never liked their part in it, and while, apparently, approving in a reluctant sort of way, it became more and more obvious to Washington that they believed the plan impracticable and would not carry it out. Their forces were not large enough for such a stupendous assault. There were only 4000 French and 4500 patriots. They gave the old excuse that their largest vessels could not cross the Sandy Hook Bar; and to go into the harbor and fight the British navy and the town with their smaller ships was not to their liking.<sup>7</sup>

What was to be done? The nearest weak detachment into which the British had divided themselves had become too strong to be attacked. Washington's army had not increased. The whole northern patriot force, counting the 4500 at the Hudson Highlands and those under Lafayette and Wayne in Virginia, was only about 8000. The States had sent practically no recruits. "Not a single man has joined me," said Washington, "except one hundred and seventy-six militia from Connecticut, who arrived at West Point yesterday, and eighty of the York levies and about two hundred state troops of Connecticut, both of which corps were upon the lines previous to leaving winter cantonments."

He felt that he must do something with the French troops now that he at last had them in the field; and if nothing could

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<sup>7</sup> B. F. Stevens, *id.*, vol. i, pp. 500-506, vol. ii, pp. 15, 20, 24, 25, 04; Writings of Washington, Ford edition, pp. 336-343 and notes; Lee, *Memoirs*, vol. ii, p. 303.



## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

be done against New York he would hurl his whole force against the weak division under Cornwallis in Virginia. But even for this purpose he needed the large additional fleet and army from France for which the Congress had asked, and which the French Court had promised.

Admiral de Grasse, who now commanded the French fleet in the West Indies, had been in France up to the 22nd of March, of this year 1781; but when sailing on that date he does not appear to have received instructions to go at any fixed time to the assistance of the patriots in America. The call for his assistance appears to have come from Washington, Rochambeau, and the French Minister at Philadelphia, who some time in July, when the chances of taking New York were failing, sent to De Grasse the frigate "Concorde," which had brought over De Barras. The "Concorde" reached the fleet of De Grasse during the last days of July with urgent dispatches, describing the desperate situation in America and leaving to De Grasse whether his assistance should take the form of an attack upon New York or upon Cornwallis in Virginia.

He responded quite promptly, choosing the attack upon Cornwallis as easiest and nearest; and the "Concorde" sailed back on the 28th of July to announce his coming. When she arrived, Washington and Rochambeau had no alternative but to abandon the attempt on New York and turn their whole attention to Virginia. They sent a joint answer to De Grasse on the 17th of August, assuring him of their determination to move the American and French armies to the Chesapeake, there to await his arrival to attack Cornwallis, or if he had escaped, attack the British in South Carolina.<sup>8</sup>

There was always a suspicion that Clinton might suddenly evacuate New York and concentrate the whole British force in the South in order to make sure of that region as part of the English colonial empire, while the North could be abandoned

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<sup>8</sup> "Operations of the French Fleet under the Count de Grasse," pp 139, 148-153; Rochambeau, *Memoirs*, vol. i, p. 277; Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iv, p. 126.



ADMIRAL DE GRASSI

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## THE FEINT AT NEW YORK

to independence or a compromise. Washington had this possibility in mind in his discussions with the French officers, and they agreed that if Clinton made that move they would join in attacking his concentrated force.

Meantime, the appearance of threatening New York was kept up so as to give De Grasse time to reach the coast, and to compel Clinton, if possible, to withdraw more troops from the South. It was hoped that he would not learn that De Grasse's fleet was destined for the Chesapeake. But nothing escaped the vigilance of the English spy system. Clinton learned that De Grasse was coming, but fortunately believed that he would join the other French fleet at Rhode Island, or if he attempted Chesapeake Bay, the British fleets would keep him out.<sup>o</sup>

The greatest care was taken to conceal from Clinton the movement of the American and French troops until the last moment. French ovens were built in New Jersey opposite Staten Island, as if a siege of New York was to be conducted from that side. Washington sent for a man known to be a British spy, treated him with great confidence and asked his advice about the strongest positions near Staten Island. These stratagems would, it was hoped, convince Clinton for a time that the new movement was a mere continuation of the designs on New York.

On the 17th of August patriot regiments began to cross the Hudson to the western side; and Heath, with a few troops, was left in command of the Highlands as a check on Clinton. On the 24th of the month the French had crossed the river, and the allied armies moved down through New Jersey towards Staten Island. Clinton was watching them closely. He suspected the real object of the movement, but thought it would be made by occupying the old position at Morristown and thence detaching southward.

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<sup>o</sup> Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. ix, pp. 270, 337, 338; B. F. Stevens, "Clinton-Cornwallis Controversy," vol. ii, p. 27; *Magazine of American History*, vol. i, p. 122, vol. xi, p. 344; Lee, *Memoirs*, vol. iii, p. 311.

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Up to the second of September the patriots and French were still, apparently, threatening the New Jersey side of New York; but before that day closed Clinton learned that they had moved "southward with an appearance of haste." In fact, they had suddenly, much to the surprise of the troops themselves, started towards Philadelphia, whence they passed on to the head of Chesapeake Bay. Clinton instantly divined their purpose, and on that same 2d of September wrote to Cornwallis warning him of the danger.

Great pains were taken to lead Clinton to think that there was to be no assistance from a French fleet and that it was doubtful whether the American and French land forces would attack Cornwallis. A report was spread that Colonel John Laurens, just arrived from Paris, had brought the news that the Emperor of Germany had declared himself the ally of Great Britain, and in consequence of this France would now withdraw all her troops and fleets from America and concentrate them in the West Indies. So cleverly was this report concocted that Rivington's loyalist Gazette in New York published it in all seriousness and rejoiced in the good news.<sup>10</sup>

Clinton, however, was not in the least deceived. He knew exactly what was happening; and he had faith that his own war-ships would keep the French fleet out of Chesapeake Bay. On that point of the naval control of the Chesapeake the whole movement hinged. If the French war-ships failed to occupy the Chesapeake, Washington's southern expedition would leave the patriot cause in worse plight than if the expedition had never started. But on the 6th of September, four days after Washington passed through New Jersey, Clinton knew that the French fleet had reached the Chesapeake.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> B. F. Stevens, "Clinton-Cornwallis Controversy," vol. ii, p. 142; Boudinot's Journal, p. 41; B. F. Stevens, *id.*, vol. ii, p. 149; Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. ix, pp. 343-347 and notes, 352; Gordon, "American Revolution," vol. iv, pp. 110-127; Tarleton, Narrative, pp. 416-418; *Annual Register*, 1781, chap. vi.

<sup>11</sup> Tarleton, Narrative, p. 418.



## ATTACK ON NEW LONDON

Relying on the British fleets to hold the Chesapeake, Clinton had taken the next natural step for a general and ordered a sudden raid upon New England, not only to prevent any more troops joining Washington, but also, if possible, to bring Washington back from Virginia. The town selected for the raid was New London, full of patriot naval stores and provisions, and also European and East and West India commodities, brought in by privateers. It was in Arnold's native state, Connecticut; and with a grim appreciation of Arnold's character, Clinton gave him command of the expedition.

He could hardly have made a better choice; for Arnold made a dash at the town as if to wreak some private vengeance. His force of 1700 men was made up largely of loyalists, the third battalion of New Jersey volunteers, the loyal Americans and the American Legion. It was to the patriots the most hateful expedition that could have been planned, loyalists commanded by the arch traitor Arnold.

With his fleet of thirty-two sail, he intended a night attack; but the north wind held him off the mouth of the Thames until 10 o'clock in the morning of the 6th of September, when he landed, and Fort Trumbull and the redoubt at the mouth of the river were evacuated at his approach.

To make sure of the destruction of the stores at New London, which was three miles farther up the river on its west bank, Arnold proceeded in person up the west side in command of part of his force. He had been born and lived only a few miles away, and it shows the conditions of the time that he had no difficulty in finding loyalists, or supposed patriots, who were really loyalists, who showed him where everything was and directed the work of destruction.

The rest of his force under Colonel Eyre went up the east bank of the river to Fort Griswold on Groton Hill, opposite New London, where about 150 militia had retreated, and prepared to make a stand to protect the shipping. They defended themselves for about forty minutes with great gallantry, but could not resist the assault of superior numbers. Only about half a dozen of them were killed in the actual

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

fighting; but as soon as the British entered they cut down nearly seventy of the prisoners and wounded over thirty.

"Who commands here?" said the British officer on entering. "I did," said Colonel Ledyard, "but you do now," and he handed him his sword, but was immediately run through with it and killed. The soldiers loaded a wagon with wounded piled one on the other, and in their haste let it run down a hill until it struck a tree. About sixty dwelling houses and eighty-four stores with great quantities of supplies were burnt; and this was the last of Clinton's raids, and Arnold's last chance for what he considered distinction.<sup>12</sup>

It had no effect, however, in deterring Washington from his purpose in Virginia. The fleet of De Grasse in the West Indies, during the last days of April, had fought some rather indecisive actions with the British fleet under Admiral Rodney. In May De Grasse took the English island of Tobago. In July, when he received the call for aid from Washington and Rochambeau, he had in charge not only the defence of the French West Indies but the convoy of the great annual merchant fleet to France; and his instructions appear to have contemplated the sending to America not more than ten or twelve war-ships. But as Washington and Rochambeau had described the American situation as desperate, and asked for the greatest possible assistance, De Grasse decided to take the risk of sending only one frigate with the convoy, leaving the French West Indies under the protection of a Spanish squadron, and concentrating his whole naval force and all the troops he could obtain on the rescue of American independence.

It was the decision of a great and daring mind, and would have been utterly beyond the narrow capacity of D'Estaing. De Grasse has been described as bold in strategy and timid in tactics; and certainly on this occasion his plans were comprehensive and sound, as well as courageous, and carried out

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<sup>12</sup> Narrative of Jonathan Rathbun on the "Capture of Groton Fort and Massacre;" Caulkins' "History of New London," pp. 545-572; Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iv, p. 178; Heath, Memoirs p. 283.

## RODNEY'S MISTAKE

with devotion and success. To obtain money he had to borrow from the Spaniards, pledging as security his own West India plantation, and the Spaniards themselves became so much interested that some ladies in Havana offered their diamonds.

All his dispositions were able and effective. He captured all the enemy's corvettes and scouting vessels and took his own fleet by an unusual route. Everything depended on his ability to enter the Chesapeake before a British fleet could enter and block him. The Ministry had learned of his intentions, and sent orders to Admiral Rodney to counteract him. Here good fortune again favored us, for Rodney taking for granted that nearly half of De Grasse's fleet would be used in convoying the fleet of merchantmen to Europe, sent to the Chesapeake only a small squadron of 15 ships under Sir Samuel Hood, which by uniting with the New York fleet under Admiral Graves, would, Rodney thought, be sufficient. He never supposed that De Grasse would take his whole fleet to the Chesapeake and have 28 ships of the line. Some time afterwards, fearing that De Grasse might have a large force, Rodney ordered Sir Peter Parker, at Jamaica, to send all his line of battle ships to join and assist Hood. But Parker displayed the same wilfulness he had exhibited before Charleston five years before, kept his ships for the defence of Jamaica and never went to the assistance of Hood.<sup>13</sup>

This combination of mistakes by Rodney and Parker had very momentous results, and was regarded as one of the important circumstances which closed the Revolution sooner than was expected. Another accident quickly followed. Clinton tried to persuade Admiral Graves at New York to attack the French fleet of De Barras at Newport and prevent it going southward to assist De Grasse. Clinton had always complained that he never could persuade British naval officers to do anything he wanted, and, while he was in vain trying to persuade Graves to

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<sup>13</sup> B. F. Stevens, "Clinton-Cornwallis Controversy," vol. i, p. 83 note, vol. ii, pp. 70 note, 71 note, 141 note; Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iv, p. 199; Lee, *Memoirs*, vol. ii, pp. 313, 314; Stedman, "American War," vol. ii, p. 388.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

this new expedition, De Barras sailed from Newport to join De Grasse in the Chesapeake.

Meantime, Sir Samuel Hood, with his small squadron, had reached the Chesapeake ahead of De Grasse, but he did not remain in the Bay because, knowing that he was much weaker in force than De Grasse and having sent word of the situation to Clinton, he expected that Admiral Graves would be sent down from New York to join him and help hold the Chesapeake. He accordingly sent a frigate northward to hurry Graves; and meantime took his own squadron up to the Capes of the Delaware. Hearing nothing of either De Grasse or Graves, he went up to New York, where, after nearly a week's delay, Graves joined him, and the two proceeded southward to the Chesapeake. But they were just too late. The day before they sailed De Grasse had entered the Bay and Cornwallis and his army were in a trap.

It was the 5th of September when Graves, in command of the combined English fleets, arrived at the mouth of the Chesapeake and saw the French fleet quietly anchored inside of Cape Henry. Not wishing to be attacked in that position, De Grasse wasted no time in getting up his anchors. He slipped the cables, buoyed them and went out to sea, leaving many of his best sailors on shore. The English were to windward, with the wind northeast, as it is so apt to be at that time of year on the Virginia coast. Some of the French ships passed out ahead of the rest; and Graves, it is supposed, could have easily cut them off, but he took no advantage of the opportunity. It has also been supposed that Hood suggested that the English ships should run into the bay as soon as the French went out, anchor with springs on their cables, so as to bring their broadsides to bear, and in this position the French could have attacked them only by going close and grappling.

Instead of this method Graves stretched out eastward, his fleet in a long line, almost parallel to the French, after the regulation manner, the vans of the two lines gradually coming together and firing. In this way they fought from four o'clock in the afternoon until sunset. The fight was principally be-



## VICTORY FOR THE FRENCH

tween the vans and centres, the rears not approaching near enough to accomplish any destruction of importance. The French were unable to gain an overwhelming victory; but they inflicted far more injury than they received. The English were unable to renew the action in the morning; and for five days the two fleets remained in sight of each other on the ocean, repairing damages and manœuvring. But the English avoided another engagement.

De Grasse watched them carefully, fearing that they might intercept the small squadron under De Barras from Rhode Island, bringing the heavy siege artillery for attacking Yorktown. Soon De Barras appeared and entered the Bay without interference from Graves, who had known of his departure from Rhode Island on the 25th of August, and had hoped to intercept him. But De Barras, suspecting this, had judiciously made a détour far out to sea instead of keeping close in with the coast.

On the 10th of September, De Barras being safe, De Grasse returned to the Chesapeake, fearing that Graves by some favorable change of wind might slip in before him. Graves had already sent in the "Richmond" and "Isis" to cut the buoys from De Grasse's cables where he had left them, and these two ships the French captured. The British ship "Terrible" was so damaged that she was abandoned and sunk. Graves and Hood then bore up to the Chesapeake again only to see De Grasse securely waiting inside. They were not much cheered by the sight, and returned to New York.<sup>11</sup>

Washington and Rochambeau had left the allied armies in charge of subordinates and went on to Philadelphia, where the patriots received them with great rejoicing. But Washington describes himself as in a state of the greatest anxiety. He had learned of the starting of the fleet under Graves and Hood,

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<sup>11</sup> Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iv, pp. 181-184; Lee, *Memoirs*, vol. ii, pp. 313, 315-320; Stedman, "American War," vol. ii, pp. 400-402; "Operations of the French Fleet under the Count de Grasse," pp. 69-75, 155-159; *Annual Register*, 1781, chap. vi; Clowes, "Royal Navy," vol. iii, p. 496.



## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

and he feared they would enter the Chesapeake ahead of De Grasse. His whole career, the whole Revolution, seemed to depend on that little circumstance, which might be settled one way or the other by the difference of an hour in time. He was anxious also about the French Rhode Island fleet under De Barras. Would it be able to reach the Chesapeake with the siege artillery? De Barras was sixty years old, a partisan of D'Estaing, with a strong hostility to De Grasse, unwilling to contribute to his success, resenting his promotion and reluctant to serve as junior under him. These feelings were so strong with him that he had shown an inclination for taking his fleet on a sort of private expedition to Newfoundland.<sup>15</sup>

Washington was also uneasy lest Cornwallis should follow the obviously best course, abandon Virginia and escape back to South Carolina, where the British forces could concentrate and make a strong stand. But this was an altogether needless anxiety; for in his whole career in the Revolution, Cornwallis had always failed to follow the obviously wise course.

There was cause enough for anxiety without this; for the more we survey the situation, the more we see how success depended upon the exact timing of three or four great movements conducted over vast distances. The patriots had never been well enough organized to conduct such movements, and now they were involved in the most complicated movement that had been attempted during the war.

Besides worrying himself with the thought that De Grasse's fleet might reach the Chesapeake too late, Washington had still another cause for great anxiety. Even if De Grasse arrived in time there might be difficulty in persuading the northern troops of the little patriot army to march as far south as Virginia. They were unpaid and might mutiny. A few months before when Wayne was starting south to join Lafayette, some of his troops had rebelled. He paraded them all, and pointing to the ring-leaders, called on the main body to take their choice and fire on him or on the mutineers. They fired on the

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<sup>15</sup> Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. ix, pp. 358-360 notes; "Operations of the French Fleet under the Count de Grasse," p. 68 note.

## DIFFICULTIES OVERCOME

mutineers, killing six. One, who was badly wounded, Wayne ordered to be bayoneted. The soldier on whom he called refused because the man was his comrade. "You will obey me or I will kill you," said Wayne, drawing his pistol. The fellow bayoneted the struggling traitor, and the rest were hung.<sup>10</sup>

To avoid another difficulty like this, Washington had told Robert Morris that he must have hard money to give the troops as a *douceur*, or they could not be persuaded to march to Virginia. But, although Morris had just put the continental finances on a supposed specie basis, he had not this \$20,000 that was necessary to set the troops in motion. He applied to General Rochambeau to lend it from the French military chest, but the general steadily refused until, while Morris was in the midst of his persuasions on a ride with the general from Philadelphia to Chester, they were met by an express rider carrying the news that De Grasse had safely reached the Chesapeake. It was a lucky moment. Rochambeau relented and lent the money.

But there was still another difficulty; for the utmost efforts of Morris had failed to procure sufficient vessels to carry the troops from the head of the Chesapeake down to Yorktown; and to march them the long distance by land in the hot weather meant serious delay, as well as heavy loss by sickness and desertion. Here again good fortune smiled; for after De Grasse had driven off Graves and Hood, he sent the transports of the Rhode Island fleet to bring down the allied armies from Elkton, at the head of Chesapeake Bay.

So every circumstance in this most complicated movement was happening well. Nor was this all; for at about the same time that the allied generals at Philadelphia heard that De Grasse was safe in the Chesapeake, they learned that the great loan of specie from France had also reached the coast. Morris had begun to despair of its safety. The French frigate "La Resolue," on which Colonel Laurens was bringing it, was sixty-two days out from Brest. Storms and a devious course

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<sup>10</sup> Stillé, "Life of Wayne," pp. 239-262; *Magazine of American History*, vol. xi, p. 163.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

to avoid the British cruisers had kept her from reaching Philadelphia; but she was now safe in Boston.

She had on board over 2,000,000 livres packed in double casks; and it was no light matter to bring it to Philadelphia. A secret expedition under the direction of Morris was organized. The casks were packed in great oaken boxes which blacksmiths strapped by welded iron to the axles of powerful ox-carts, so that no ordinary force could remove them. Oxen were purchased, and with four of these patient animals to each box the precious train moved far into the interior under a strong guard of cavalry. It was a most magnificent opportunity for Tarleton. But, fortunately, he was far away in the south; and the long ox train passed out to Worcester, from Worcester to Springfield, to Greenwood, to Salisbury, to Fishkill, crossing the Hudson at Newburgh, and thence by Newton and Easton to Philadelphia. It almost instantly, under the skilful handling of Morris, raised the patriot cause from the bankruptcy of worthless paper money to a government of specie payments with a solvent national bank. Morris made the sum seem greater than it really was. It was very conspicuously displayed in the bank. Large quantities of it were lying about. Men were constantly moving it back and forth from the vaults. Whenever any considerable amount of it had to be paid out, secret agents of the bank endeavored to get it back. For three years our ally, France, had seemed useless to us, but at this last moment *she was everything*.<sup>17</sup>

Now that Cornwallis knew that the allied armies were at the head of the Bay and the French fleet at the mouth, cutting off his communication with the sea, he had a chance to escape towards Charleston, which was the only way open. Such a move would have deeply disappointed his enemies and even made them appear somewhat ridiculous. Washington and Rochambeau would have been obliged to march their armies back to the Hudson, and De Grasse having nothing to keep

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<sup>17</sup> Oberholtzer's "Robert Morris," pp 103-107; Sumner, "Financier and Finances of the Revolution," vol. i, p. 298; Heath, *Memoirs*, p. 293.

## CORNWALLIS'S CHANCES

him in the Chesapeake would have had to return ingloriously to the West Indies. Greene expected that Cornwallis would draw out of his dangerous position and escape. But a general who had deliberately put himself into the Yorktown trap would naturally not have sufficient sense to go out of it, even when the door was wide open.

He also had a chance of beating some of his enemies in detail before they could unite their forces. About three thousand troops were landed from the French fleet not twelve miles from Yorktown under their commander St. Simon. Cornwallis could have spared fifty-five hundred men from his defences at Yorktown to attack these three thousand rather sickly West India Frenchmen before they could unite with Lafayette's force. But he let the opportunity pass, and he also failed to attack Lafayette.

His excuse for this and for not escaping from Yorktown was that Clinton had promised to come in person to his relief and had left him without "the smallest particle of discretionary power." He was not authorized to escape to Charleston. He must continue holding Yorktown at every hazard. He would have attacked Lafayette and St. Simon "without hesitation," he said, "if I had thought myself at liberty, after a victory, to escape into the Carolinas."

All these excuses of having no discretionary power were very surprising from a man who had persuaded the Ministry to overturn the policy of his superior officer. It was very strange, said Clinton, that the general, who had thought himself at liberty to march into Virginia contrary to orders, and risk South Carolina and all the British troops in it, should suddenly feel himself so hampered by instructions that he could not take advantage of an opportunity to save his troops from certain defeat.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iv, p. 190; B. F. Stevens, "Clinton-Cornwallis Controversy," vol. i, pp. 75, 77 and notes, vol. ii, pp. 151 note, 152, 153 note, 155, 157 notes; Tarleton, Narrative, pp. 366-370; Clinton's "Observations of the French Fleet under Count de Grasse," p. 86; Stedman, "American War," vol. ii, p. 407.



### CIII.

#### THE SIEGE OF YORKTOWN

THERE has been considerable dispute as to who originated the expedition against Cornwallis, which produced such important results. Clinton thought that De Grasse had suggested it when he heard that the pilots could not carry his large ships over the bar to attack the British in New York harbor. Some have said that it originated with Washington, and others, that the credit of it belongs to Rochambeau. Washington had long had the movement in mind, as one to be taken if he could not attack New York, and he unquestionably conducted the part of it which depended on him with his usual care and judgment. But it is probable that the idea of such a movement originated with no one in particular. It was one of those obvious movements which was apparent to any close military observer of the time. General Greene had mentioned it in one of his letters in June as something which no one would question. Clinton suspected that such a movement would be made, but felt confident that it would be defeated by the fleet under Graves and Hood, keeping De Grasse out of the Chesapeake.<sup>1</sup>

De Grasse's supposed suggestion of it means merely that, knowing he could not successfully attack New York, he sent word that he would go to the Chesapeake, where another and weaker division of the British force was stationed. Washington's letters and his consultations with Rochambeau show the exhaustive carefulness with which the whole situation was discussed during the spring and summer; and, when Clinton had reinforced New York so that it could not be taken, and De

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<sup>1</sup> B. F. Stevens, *id.*, vol. ii, pp. 26 note, 142, 149, 150, 162 note, 180; G. E. Greene, "Life of General Greene," vol. iii, p. 323; Lee, *Memoirs*, vol. ii, pp. 308, 309, 311, 312, 313.



## OUR DEBT TO FRANCE

Grasse's powerful fleet was known to be on the way, it required no great military intellect to see at once the necessity of a dash at Virginia to take Lord Cornwallis, who commanded the weaker and the nearer of the other two British divisions.

It was altogether a question of superiority on the water. So soon as the patriot side had that superiority, and New York was too strong to be attacked, there could be no hesitation as to the next step that should be taken; and here we see the debt we owe to France. Our people had complained of the slowness of our French allies, their long months of inactivity in Rhode Island, their predilection for protecting their West India possessions and leaving our independence to perish. But it must be confessed that without De Grasse's fleet, Rochambeau's four thousand troops, the three thousand of St. Simon, and the heavy French siege artillery, it would have been impossible for our weak and bankrupt little army of only five thousand men under Washington, to have taken any advantage of the situation which the blunders of Cornwallis had created.

Cornwallis, with stupid complacency, remained at Yorktown working at his defences during the month of September, while the transports of the French Rhode Island fleet were bringing down the troops from the head of the bay. That a general who saw his means of supplies, reinforcements and rescue completely blocked by a powerful French fleet, and a land army approaching him, should make no attempt to escape, was a source of wonder and disgust to Clinton, and amusement to Washington and Rochambeau.

By the twenty-fifth of September the American and French armies had entered the James River, landed and marched to Williamsburg. Washington and Rochambeau, with some of their officers, went down to the Capes of Virginia to visit De Grasse on his flagship the "Ville de Paris." Here they found that De Grasse, having heard that the British fleets at New York had been reinforced by six ships of the line, was inclined to take his whole force to New York and lock them in there to prevent their coming to the Chesapeake, and blockading him in a similar way. In other words, he was within an ace of

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

sacrificing the splendid and sure prospect of success immediately before him for the sake of an adventurous experiment three hundred miles away, with the chance that the British fleets might come out of New York and by some shift of wind slip into the Chesapeake ahead of him. It required the strongest persuasions of Washington and his officers to bring him back to reason.<sup>2</sup>

The patriot and French land forces, now collected at Williamsburg, were combined with those of Lafayette, Wayne and St. Simon, already in Virginia. They numbered 8800 Americans and 7800 French; and in addition to these there were the two French fleets of De Grasse and De Barras numbering 40 ships of the line, mounting 2000 guns and manned by about 20,000 sailors, the sum total of which was surely enough to dispose of Yorktown defended by 7500 troops and 840 sailors. That events should have so shaped themselves that this overwhelming force could be concentrated on one of the important divisions of the British army, in the darkest and most hopeless hour of the patriot cause, seems almost miraculous. It was principally the result of the blunders of Cornwallis; and that he should have deliberately remained in Yorktown week after week, watching the huge armament accumulating against him without an effort to escape, is one of the wonders of military history.<sup>3</sup>

On the 28th of September the Americans and French marched to Yorktown and the next day invested it. The French established themselves on the upper side and the Americans on the lower. Gloucester Point on the opposite side of the river was invested by the Duke de Lauzun's Legion and some Virginia militia under Weedon. At the last moment De Grasse gave Washington notice that if an English fleet appeared he would go out into the ocean to fight it.

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<sup>2</sup> Lee, *Memoirs*, vol. ii, pp. 320-329.

<sup>3</sup> Tarleton, *Narrative*, pp. 390, 417, 423, 432; Lee, *Memoirs*, vol. ii, p. 363; Johnston, "*Siege of Yorktown*," pp. 112-117, 195.

## THE RIVER BLOCKADED

It required one of Washington's strongest letters, and the persuasions of Lafayette in person, to dissuade De Grasse from this violation of the understanding, which was that he should bring part of his fleet into the mouth of York River and effectually block it up so that Cornwallis could not escape in his own vessels and no succor or rescue could reach him from the sea. Unless this was done Washington saw that a British fleet might cleverly entice De Grasse out into the ocean to fight, while a detachment of vessels slipped into the Bay and reinforced or rescued Cornwallis.

Lafayette succeeded in his mission, and about the time the allied armies surrounded Yorktown De Grasse had part of his fleet in the mouth of the river, while the remainder of his vessels guarded the mouth of the Bay at the Capes. Washington now felt sure of success unless Cornwallis should break away and escape southward. We see more clearly than ever how any operations in Virginia, whether American or British, were entirely dependent on a covering fleet, when we find Washington explaining at length to De Grasse that unless his fleet came into the York River the allied armies would have to disband. Virginia was exhausted of provisions by raiding; subsistence could not be drawn from the North by wagons because of the great number of large rivers which intersected the country; and the sole reliance for supplies, as well as for capturing Cornwallis, must be upon a superior fleet.<sup>4</sup>

Washington could not bring himself to believe that Cornwallis would not try to escape. The way was still open to him, even after the siege had begun. The York River was so wide that the British army could embark in boats, and taking advantage of a leading wind and tide, sail far up the river unmolested, and then with a long start begin their march to South Carolina. Many people believed that Cornwallis would surely make this attempt; and Washington besought

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<sup>4</sup> Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. ix, pp. 360-376; Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iv, pp. 180-190; B. F. Stevens, "Clinton-Cornwallis Controversy," vol. ii, pp. 165-168.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

De Grasse to send three ships up the river above Yorktown to stop such an escape. But De Grasse feared that any vessels he sent would be exposed to the fire ships which the enemy could float against them with the tide; and the way of escape remained open to Cornwallis all through the siege.<sup>5</sup>

On the second day of the siege the Americans were surprised to find that Cornwallis had quitted his exterior fortifications on which he had been working so long and retired to an inner line of defence. The reason he gave for this was that he had received word that Clinton was coming to his relief with a fleet and over five thousand troops; and he thought he could easily hold the interior works until Clinton arrived. It was not an entirely clear reason; and it was a very fatal movement, because it gave the Americans and French possession of ground "which commanded in near advance," as Washington said, "all the rest of the British Works." These inner defences to which Cornwallis hastily retired, had not, it seems, been surveyed, and were in no adequate state of preparation. In other words, the exterior works, on which he had had his men employed for nearly a month, were abandoned by him without firing a shot; and yet his letters had led Clinton to believe that he was capable of withstanding a siege.<sup>6</sup>

On the night of the second day, the allied armies erected two redoubts in the exterior works which Cornwallis had abandoned, eleven hundred yards from his inner defences. On the night of the sixth of October they moved up to within six hundred yards of him and began their first parallel. The night being dark and rainy the trench was started, and the workmen got under cover of it before they could be injured by any firing from the forts. Three days afterwards redoubts and batteries had been erected in the trench, and a heavy cannonade was opened from the French siege guns and mor-

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<sup>5</sup> Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. ix, pp. 375, 376 and note.

<sup>6</sup> B. F. Stevens, *id.*, vol. i, p. 84, vol. ii, pp. 52 note, 97 note, 127 note, 137 notes, 174, 177 notes, 214 notes, 215 notes; Stedman, "American War," vol. ii, p. 409.

## REDOUBTS TAKEN

tars which had been brought from Rhode Island. Several of the British ships were soon set on fire by the red hot balls and shells. On the night of the 10th the second parallel was begun three hundred yards from the enemy's works, and Cornwallis writes to Clinton that his men are falling fast and he cannot hold out much longer.<sup>7</sup>

The firing from both sides was now at close range and very severe. Two advanced redoubts of the British must be taken, and a party of Americans under Lafayette assaulted one, and French troops under Baron Viomenil the other. There had been great indignation in the allied armies since the news of Arnold's cruelty at New London, and Lafayette asked Washington for permission to retaliate if he took the redoubt. "You have full command," said Washington, "and may order as you please."

On the night of the 14th Lafayette's men, under command of Alexander Hamilton, rushed to the assault with bayonets set, unloaded guns and the watchword, "Remember New London." They carried the redoubt in a few moments with a loss of only eight killed and twenty-eight wounded. They had been given permission to massacre the prisoners, but were too humane to take such an advantage, and the loss of the enemy was less than the loss of the assailants. The French were also successful in taking the redoubt they attacked, but as it was defended by greater numbers they lost heavily.<sup>8</sup>

The two redoubts thus taken were included during the night in the second parallel, and Cornwallis hastily wrote to Clinton,

"My situation now becomes very critical; we dare not show a gun to their old batteries, and I expect that their new ones will open tomorrow morning; experience has shown that our fresh earthen works do not resist their powerful artillery, so that we shall soon be exposed to an

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<sup>7</sup> B. F. Stevens, *id.*, vol. ii, pp. 174, 176-177.

<sup>8</sup> Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. ; Irving, "Life of Washington;" Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. ix, pp. 380-388; B. F. Stevens, *id.*, vol. ii, pp. 205-216.



## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

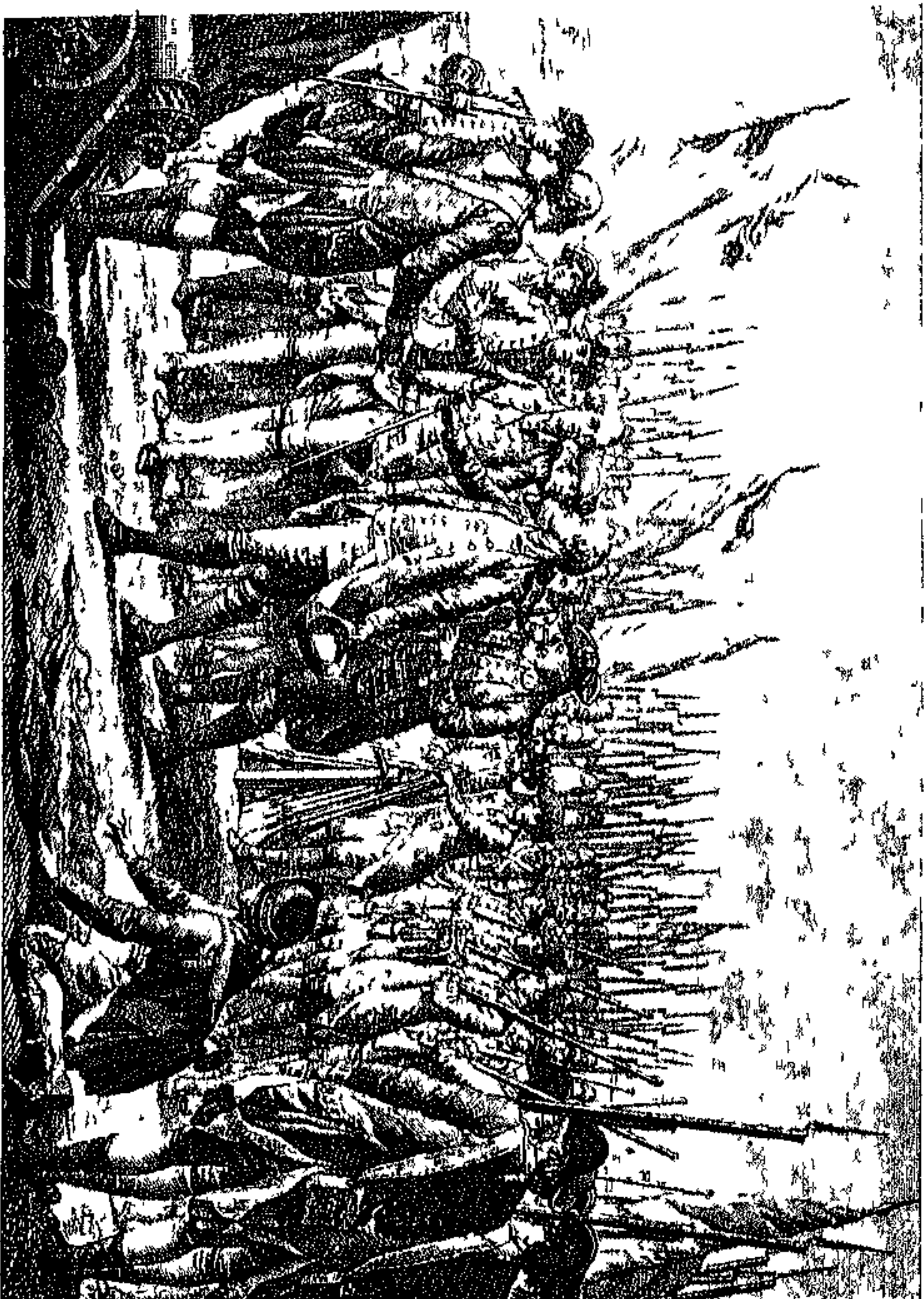
assault in ruined works, in a bad position, and with weakened numbers. The safety of the place is therefore so precarious, that I cannot recommend that the fleet and army should run great risque in endeavoring to save us." (B. F. Stevens, *id.*, vol. ii, p. 188.)

Clinton received this letter just as he was sailing from New York, with the fleets of Graves and Hood and seven thousand troops, to attempt the impossible task of a rescue. On the 16th of October, the day after the letter was written, a sortie by the British, under Colonel Abercrombie, took two American batteries at daybreak and spiked the guns. But by four o'clock in the afternoon our troops had drawn the spikes and were again firing the guns. The British works were being rapidly demolished. In fact, the inner line which the British were defending, had been so weak and in such an unfinished state from the beginning of the siege that the allied fire had wrecked it within a week.

Although he had been unwilling to escape with his army to South Carolina when he had a fairly good chance, the extraordinary mind of Cornwallis now conceived the madcap idea of breaking through the part of the besieging armies at Gloucester, and escaping northward towards New York, whence Clinton might come to meet and support him. It would be a distance of three or four hundred miles across innumerable great rivers, and through a country in which patriot militia might be raised.

"I should have gained the upper country," he says, "by rapid marches, mounting infantry by collecting horses on the way, and leaving my intended route doubtful, until I was opposite to the fords of the great rivers. I then intended to have turned off to the northward, expecting that the enemy would principally take their measures to prevent my escape to the southward. The success of this attempt would no doubt have been precarious, and I cannot say that it would have been practicable to have reached New York; but in our desperate situation I thought it well deserved a trial." (B. F. Stevens, "Clinton-Cornwallis Controversy," vol. i, pp. 78, 79.)

Tarleton, somewhat earlier in the siege, had been enthusi-



OLD FRENCH ENGRAVING OF THE SURRENDER OF CORNWALLIS



## AN ESCAPE PLANNED

astically in favor of this plan. It was exactly suited to his adventurous mind. But after once getting well to the westward, where the fords of the rivers, both north and south, would be shallow, he thought it would be best to be guided by circumstances, whether to go to the Carolinas or to New York. He had already had a brush with the French cavalry at Gloucester. He longed for another opportunity; and, in the fervid language of the raider, he described how he would cut them to pieces, mount the infantry of Cornwallis on their horses and sweep the whole British army through the South. It would certainly have been most romantic and dashing. Washington was much amused when he heard of it; and it has usually been condemned as impossible, except by Harry Lee, who believed that there would have been fairly good chances for success.

Boats were secretly prepared, and at 10 o'clock at night they began to carry British troops across to Gloucester Point. Cornwallis intended to leave behind him all the baggage and a small detachment to surrender; and for this purpose the detachment was provided with a suitable letter directed to Washington. Most of the troops had crossed when a violent storm of wind arose which drove the last embarkation down the river. A smaller circumstance than a wind storm was sufficient to change the plans of Cornwallis, which were always in a state of solution. He now withdrew from his romantic dash, got his boats again and employed them during the morning in bringing back the troops from Gloucester Point, so that they might take part in a plain and commonplace surrender to Washington.

There was only one British cannon left that could be fired, and surrender had become a pressing necessity. The terms were arranged on the seventeenth of October, and on the nineteenth the formal surrender took place. Cornwallis, either from sickness or mortification, declined to perform his part of the ceremony, and his place was taken by General O'Hara, the second in command. General Lincoln, who had surrendered Charleston to Clinton, was present; and as Clinton had refused him the honor of marching out with colors flying that

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

privilege was refused to Cornwallis, and Lincoln received the surrender in precisely the same way in which his own had been conducted a year and a half before.<sup>9</sup>

The prisoners of every kind, including the sick and the wounded, were 7247 troops and 840 sailors, but only 3800 of the troops were effectives. Cornwallis attempted to obtain the same terms which Burgoyne had so cunningly obtained from Gates. He asked that the troops should be allowed to return to Europe under a parole not to serve against America or France. But this artifice could not succeed with Washington; and all the surrendered troops were obliged to remain in the United States as prisoners of war until regularly exchanged.

There were a number of loyalists with the British, and, as the patriot hatred of these people was now more intense than ever, Cornwallis tried to have a special clause for their protection inserted in the terms of surrender. But he could obtain nothing more than that the loyalists must be given up to the mercy of their countrymen. The savage animosity against them and their dread of what the patriots might do are shown by the efforts made to save them; and at last it was arranged that the sloop-of-war "Bonetta" should be allowed to go to sea unexamined, and on this vessel the most obnoxious of the loyalists escaped to New York.

A week after the surrender, Graves, Hood and General Clinton, with seven thousand troops and a fleet, arrived in Chesapeake Bay. Their departure from New York had been much delayed. But even if they had arrived a week before the surrender, what could they have done against the overwhelming odds of the allies? If they had landed their seven thousand troops, those troops would have been isolated. The

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<sup>9</sup> Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iv, pp. 191-197; Tarleton, Narrative, pp. 372-393, 418-458; Lee, Memoirs, vol. ii, pp. 329-375; B. F. Stevens, *id.*, vol. ii, pp. 189, 190, 192, 193, 194, 195, 199-203; Drake, "Life of General Knox," pp. 69-73; Thacher's *Military Journal*; Tilghman's *Diary*; Feltman's *Journal*; Lamb's "American War;" Boudinot's *Journal*, p. 49.



## CORNWALLIS COMPLAINS

16,000 allies could have destroyed them and then returned to finish Cornwallis.

Clinton could do nothing but receive the news of the surrender. De Grasse being satisfied with what was accomplished, merely held his position in the Chesapeake, would not go out to fight the British, and they returned to protect New York.

In a letter to Clinton of the 20th of October, reporting the siege and surrender, Cornwallis complained that he had never had much faith in the position at Yorktown, and that a successful defence of it was impossible. He implied that he had been forced to occupy it by Clinton's orders to select some port for the protection of naval vessels, and, finding Old Point unfit, Yorktown was the only one that presented itself. He also indulged in some heroic language, describing how he would have escaped to New York, or gone out and attacked Washington's army in the open field, if he had not been relying on Clinton's promise to come to his relief.

All these insinuations and misconstructions were denied by Clinton with hot indignation, and, in a subsequent conversation between the generals in New York, Cornwallis acknowledged that he had said too much, and that the letter of the 20th of October was "written under very great agitation of mind and might contain some mistakes."

Learning, however, that the old insinuations were still repeated, Clinton demanded from Cornwallis a denial in writing; and his Lordship wrote a letter which, without positively withdrawing the insinuations, explained them and mitigated them in an equivocal way, and in conclusion again admitted that the letter of the 20th of October had been "written under great agitation of mind and in a great hurry."<sup>10</sup>

But Cornwallis was the first to return to England, and his letter of the 20th of October was read in Parliament unaccompanied by any evidence of his denial of its statements, and without the reading of his subsequent letter to Clinton, in which he explained those statements. Cornwallis defended

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<sup>10</sup> B. F. Stevens, *id.*, vol. ii, pp. 206 note, 218, 220-224 and notes.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

himself skilfully. His political influence seems to have been boundless, and his henchmen came to his assistance in such strength that he was represented as the great hero of the war, the victor of Camden and of Guilford, the two most remarkable battles fought in America, while Clinton was represented as the evil influence which had thwarted the great military genius, prevented his saving the colonies for the British Empire, and, by failure to support him, brought him to an unmerited surrender at Yorktown.

It is curious that while Burgoyne demanded an investigation of his surrender at Saratoga, and was wrecked and ruined in public estimation, and never again given an important command, Cornwallis, who was far more culpable, never suffered the ruffling of a feather; but, on the contrary, rose in importance and was shortly given high office and honors. He succeeded Warren Hastings in the Governor Generalship of India within a year after his surrender at Yorktown and while he was still a prisoner of war under parole. He won distinguished victories over Indian princes who had no Greenes or Morgans to command their armies. He enlarged the British dominions in the East, and his name stands among the illustrious Indian administrators.<sup>11</sup>

It is a striking commentary on the way in which distinction could be obtained by British noblemen, that this officer, who, in his campaigns in America against white men, was notoriously deficient in strategy, could in his campaigns in India, against inferior dark-skinned people, rise to a position among the capable military men of Great Britain.

When, however, Clinton reached England, he could not allow the situation to remain in the way Cornwallis had placed it. It was impossible, of course, to bring such an influential member of the aristocracy to trial and justice for military misconduct. Clinton tried in vain to force him to a duel, and as a last resort published the letters and evidence, and created a pamphlet controversy, in which he entirely exonerated himself

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<sup>11</sup> Frazer, "British India."

## THE CONTROVERSY

and revealed the incompetence and blunders of his Lordship throughout his whole campaign, from the time of his leaving South Carolina until his final submission at Yorktown. It has been a fortunate controversy for the historian, for the pamphlets and letters, admirably collected and edited, reveal profuse details of the last stages of the Revolution.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> B. F. Stevens, *id.*, vol. ii, pp. 206 notes, 222 notes.

## CIV.

### THE EFFECT OF THE FALL OF YORKTOWN AND OF THE LOSS OF EUSTATIUS, MINORCA AND ST. CHRISTOPHER

THE movements of the recent campaign, the feint at New York, the arrival of De Grasse's fleet in the Chesapeake in the nick of time, his landing of St. Simon's French troops, his bold and successful attack on the English fleet under Graves and Hood, the fortunate arrival of the Rhode Island squadron of De Barras, leading to the rapid transportation from the head of the Chesapeake of the patriot and French armies to besiege Yorktown, the heavy French siege artillery brought by De Barras, and the skilful handling of the artillery at the siege were well described by Tarleton as "projects that were conceived with profound wisdom combined together with singular propriety and crowned with unvaried success."

It has been usual in modern times to regard the surrender of Cornwallis as closing the Revolution; but at the time of its occurrence it was not regarded by every one as having that effect. It was the surrender of only the weakest of the three British divisions. It was the loss of only Virginia, on which the British had never professed to have much hold. They still held New York as strongly as ever; they held Wilmington in North Carolina; Savannah in Georgia; and, most important of all, Charleston, at that time the Capital, and, to a great extent, the strategic position of the South. In the event of mediation of European powers to close the war, England might still claim that having conquered and being still in possession of the South, she could not be required to relinquish it.

Washington looked forward to at least another year of fighting, and urged upon the Congress the importance of making great preparations for following up the success at Yorktown. Feeling that so much remained to be done, and knowing that

## DISPOSITION OF FORCES.

his army was well nigh helpless, without the aid of the French naval superiority on the coast, he suggested to De Grasse that he at once proceed with his fleet to attack Charleston from the sea while the American and French armies besieged it from the land. There was every reason to suppose, he said, that it would be as easily taken as Yorktown, and the whole British force could then be driven from both South Carolina and Georgia.

But De Grasse felt compelled to refuse. He had already overstayed the date on which he should have returned to the West Indies. He at first thought that he might be able to transport a body of patriot troops under Lafayette to the neighborhood of Wilmington and give them some brief assistance in an assault on that town; but even this service he now declined. He said, however, that, unless prevented by orders of the French Court, he fully expected to return to the American coast the following summer and take part in the campaign of that year.

Washington abandoned his plans against Charleston and Wilmington. All he could do was to put his Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia troops under St. Clair and send them to assist Greene in South Carolina. The rest of his army he put in charge of General Lincoln who took it back to the North, where it resumed its old position at the Hudson Highlands.

De Grasse's fleet sailed on the fifth of November for the West Indies. The French army under Rochambeau remained as a protection to Virginia, and camped near Williamsburg until the following summer.

It was Washington's intention to begin operations from Virginia in May. He expected that De Grasse and his fleet would return to the Chesapeake about that time, and without them he frankly admitted that the patriot party would be helpless.

"Without a decisive naval force we can do nothing. . . . A constant naval superiority would terminate the war speedily; without it I do not know that it ever will be terminated honorably." (Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. ix, p. 407.)



## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

This was the peculiar situation to which affairs had been reduced, in spite of the success at Yorktown. The patriot party was so exhausted by five years of war, the number of indifferents and hesitators, and even out and out loyalists, had so increased that no more troops could be raised than barely enough to hold the Hudson Highlands, and send a few men to Greene in the South. The high enthusiasm which in the summer of 1776 had raised twenty thousand men to fight the Battle of Long Island had evaporated. Even the prospect of trapping Cornwallis at Yorktown had failed to restore it, and at the siege of that place only 8800 patriots had appeared.

Without the aid of the French fleet the patriots could not attack the British in either Charleston or New York. If they concentrated on one of those places, the British, with the control of the sea, could quickly reinforce it from the other; and the distance between the two was too great for effective land transportation by the patriots, especially of siege artillery. In a land march from the Hudson to Charleston, Washington calculated that one-half the force would be lost by desertion and sickness.

The whole situation was now in a delicate poise. England was carrying on heavy wars in widely separate portions of the globe; with the French in the West Indies and in India; with the Spaniards at Gibraltar; with the native tribes of India, with Holland all over the ocean and with the United States on the American seaboard, where everything seemed to depend on the return of the French fleet. If the French returned and gave him naval superiority Washington intended to begin the campaign with an attack upon Charleston or upon New York. Whichever one was attacked, it was hoped that the British would have to lose it or abandon the other to reinforce it.<sup>1</sup>

During the autumn of the surrender of Cornwallis, the patriot situation in the South improved. In December the

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<sup>1</sup> Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. ix, pp. 389-410, 415, 420, 429, 432, 437, 454; Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iv, pp. 198-202.

## PATRIOTISM IN THE SOUTH

British abandoned Wilmington and lost any claim they might have to retain North Carolina. Outside of the towns of Charleston and Savannah the States of South Carolina and Georgia had already relapsed into the hands of the patriots. American government had been established in Georgia in the middle of August. Rutledge, the exiled Governor of South Carolina, had returned, and, at the end of September, he issued a proclamation offering pardon to loyalists who had joined the British, if they would serve for six months in the Patriot Militia.

Certain exceptions to the pardon were made of those who had accepted British commissions, signed congratulatory addresses on British victories, or been obnoxiously prominent and active. These exceptions were too much like an imitation of British methods; but they were not, it seems, enforced. Some of the loyalists who came within them voluntarily surrendered themselves, relying on the American sense of fairness, and they were not disappointed.

A confiscation act was also passed, but was not applied to those whose submission to the British had been forced. In the end the pacification was thoroughly American, and the result showed the superiority of this method over the time-honored British system, which had been used so much in Ireland.

Hundreds of loyalists came out from the British lines. All the hesitators and trimmers became violent patriots and would have it believed that they had never been anything else. Nor were they deterred by a thundering proclamation by General Leslie in Charleston, announcing terrible punishments and vengeance against all loyalists who, as militiamen or civilians, should take a part in this second patriot usurpation.<sup>2</sup>

News of the surrender of Cornwallis reached London on the twenty-fifth of November, and was first communicated to Germain, who sent word of it to Lord North and to the King. Lord North received it, Germain said, "as he would have taken

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<sup>2</sup> Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. ix, pp. 410 note, 431; Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iv, pp. 211-267.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

a ball in his breast." He opened his arms, exclaiming wildly, as he paced up and down the room,—“Oh, God! It is all over!” The King, however, received the news with perfect composure, and reiterated his determination to continue the war.<sup>a</sup>

Two days afterwards Parliament assembled. The King's speech from the throne was as firm as ever for the war; and for many weeks, in spite of the torrents of denunciation and ridicule from Whig leaders, there were no indications that the disaster at Yorktown would produce any change in the Tory policy or in the Tory Ministry. The whole principle and justification of the war was re-argued. Lord North called for united support in this hour of national calamity; and the address to the crown indirectly approving the prosecution of the war was carried by a majority of eighty-nine.

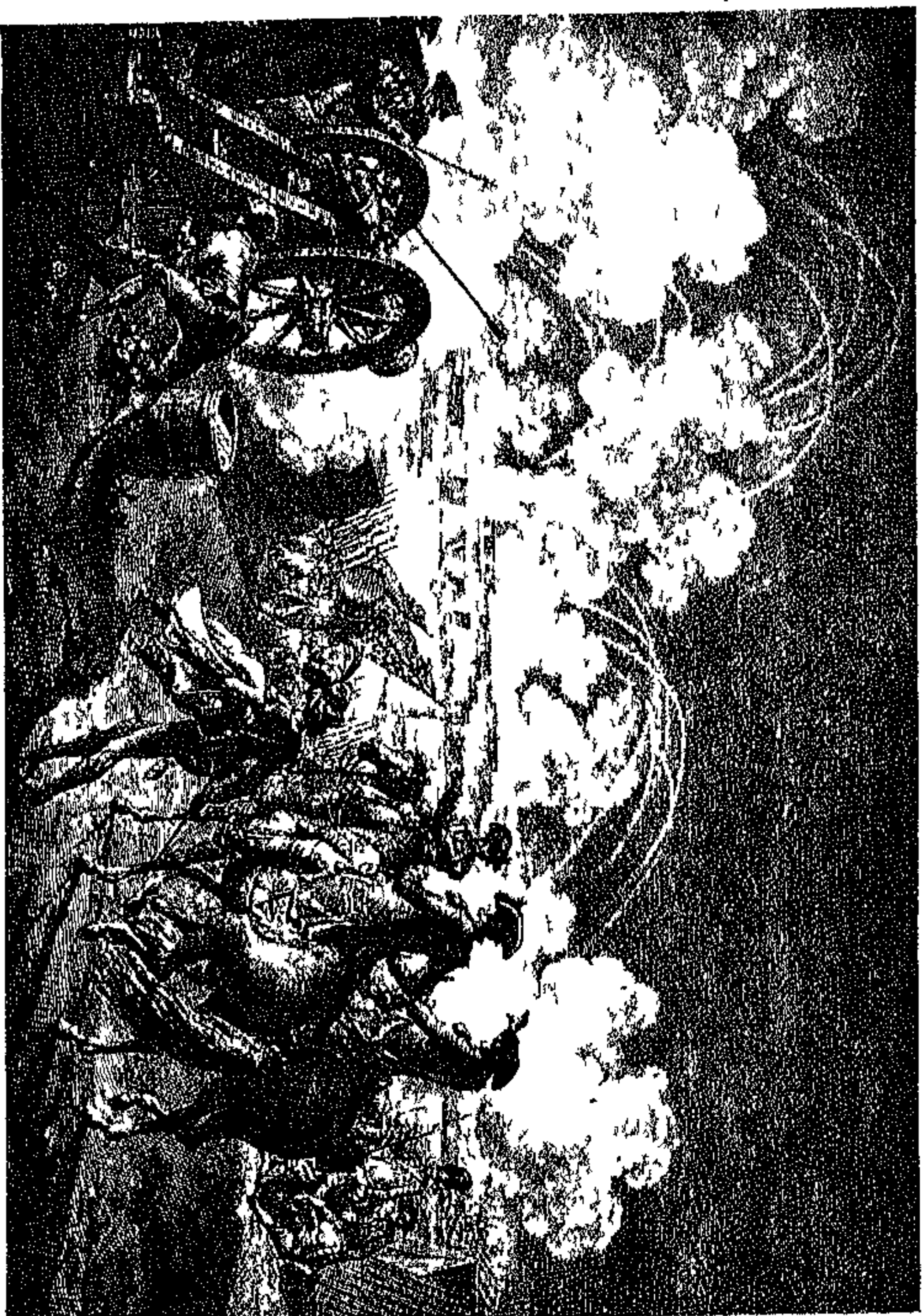
The state of affairs in both the East and the West Indies was by no means unfavorable. As an offset to the surrender of Cornwallis, Sir Eyre Coote had beaten Hyder Ali's great army in India, with the usual terrible slaughter of the natives, and had driven him from Madras to the centre of the Carnatic. On the very day of the King's speech from the throne the English garrison at Gibraltar had made a sally at three o'clock in the morning, inflicting a heavy defeat on the besieging Spaniards, and destroying all their works, spiking the guns and blowing up the magazines.

But, although Parliament seemed willing to sustain the general conduct of the administration, there was such serious hostility against Germain, who was regarded as largely responsible for mistakes in everything relating to America, that to save the Ministry he placed his resignation in the hands of Lord North. With this amendment it was believed that the Ministry could continue; especially if Germain's place was filled by a Whig; for the Ministry had adopted a partial Whig policy. They had admitted that offensive operations were no

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<sup>a</sup> “Diary and Letters of Thomas Hutchinson,” vol. ii, p. 372; Wraxall, *Memoirs*, pp. 263-264.





OLD FRENCH ENGRAVING OF THE SIEGE OF FORT ST PHILIPPE IN MINORCA

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## EUSTATIUS TAKEN

longer possible in America; that a defensive policy was all that could be undertaken there if the more important part of the war against France and Spain was to be maintained. But North failed to fill German's place until February, and then filled it with Mr. Welbore Ellis, a Tory.

As the Tories had admitted that only a defensive war could now be carried on in America, the Whigs moved that the American war be abandoned altogether for the sake of carrying on more effectively those other wars against England's natural and more dangerous enemies. The motion was lost, but by a vote of one hundred and seventy-nine against two hundred and twenty, which showed that the great Tory majority of the last six years was decidedly impaired.

Some weeks afterwards the unpleasant news reached England that the French in November, by a very gallant night attack led by the Marquis de Bouille, had surprised and taken the English garrison on the island of Eustatius, which England had recently taken from the Dutch. The Marquis had landed at the back of the island, in a bay unguarded but with such dangerous surf and rocks that most of his small boats were dashed to pieces, and he succeeded in landing only about four hundred of his two thousand men. He attacked the garrison while they were drilling on the parade ground and captured the Governor while he was taking his morning ride on horseback. A great sum of money, estimated at 2,000,000 francs, part of the proceeds of the sale of the plundered Dutch property, was still on the island, and fell into his hands.<sup>4</sup>

At the same time the Ministry had sent Admiral Kempenfelt to intercept a great convoy from France, carrying supplies to the fleet of De Grasse in the West Indies. But Kempenfelt found himself inferior to the French fleet, and succeeded in

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<sup>4</sup> Wraxall, *Memoirs*, pp. 205-273; *Writings of Washington*, Ford edition, vol. ix, pp. 430, 447 note, 400; "Operations of the French Fleet under Count de Grasse," pp. 91-93; Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iv, pp. 214, 217, 219, 220; Stedman, "American War," vol. ii, p. 410.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

cutting off only a part of the supply ships. The damage done was considerable; but the Whigs declared the expedition a failure and made it the basis for a violent attack upon the Ministry, who knew perfectly well, it was said, the size of the French fleet which Kempenfelt was to meet, and yet neglected to give him sufficient force.

The Ministry survived this attack and determined to continue the war actively against France, Spain and Holland, but passively in America, where they would merely hold what they had. There came, however, another blow for them when news arrived in February of the taking of the British Island of Minorca by the Spaniards and French. Minorca was one of the Balearic Islands in the Mediterranean, near the coast of Spain, and with Gibraltar constituted England's stronghold in that sea and the source of her influence in Southern Europe. The island was almost as important to her as Malta is in modern times, and its loss was serious.

The Whigs had just been making a heavy attack on one of the Ministry, Lord Sandwich, for his conduct of the Navy Department, and the motion charging him with gross mismanagement was lost by a majority of only nineteen. The Whigs now boldly offered a motion that the American war be abandoned; and the Ministry saved themselves by a majority of only one vote.

Encouraged by the prospect of certain success the Whigs renewed their motion on the 27th of February, and, after defeating a motion to adjourn, carried their measure without a division. The next day a bill was brought in, and soon passed into a law, authorizing the King to conclude a peace or truce with America, and for that purpose giving him full power to repeal, annul or suspend the operation of any Act of Parliament relating to the Colonies.

As there was no mention of independence, and full power was given to repeal the whole mass of legislation relating to America, the intention evidently was to stop actual fighting, repeal any Acts which were supposed to have caused the war, and, starting with a clean slate, negotiate for some sort of

## TAKING OF ST. KITTS

treaty or truce which would keep the American States within the Empire.

The Ministry, however, considered themselves defeated on only one point and not driven from power. They were willing to conform to this change in policy towards America and go on with the rest of the war. But the Whigs began introducing motions, which declared that the House had withdrawn all confidence from the administration. A great debate ensued; both parties mustered their full strength, and the Ministry won by a majority of nine votes.

This majority might have been larger if the Ministry had not just received another staggering blow as bad as the surrender of Cornwallis. News had arrived that the French after a month's severe siege had taken the British West India Island of St. Christopher, or St. Kitts, as it was commonly called at that time, with its fortifications on Brimstone Hill, supposed to be almost impregnable. The attack had been conducted by that very energetic and capable French officer, the Marquis de Bouille, who two months before had taken Eustatius. The attack on St. Kitts was in fact a following up of the success of Eustatius, and part of a plan which contemplated the rapid conquest of all the British West Indies. De Grasse was back among them with a fleet, giving French naval superiority, and the British Government was weakened by the disasters at Yorktown, Eustatius and Minorca.

St. Kitts was desperately defended by its garrison under General Frazer, assisted by Shirley, the Governor of the Island. They were supported by a powerful British fleet of twenty ships of the line under Sir Samuel Hood, who for a month fought and manœuvred against the superior fleet of De Grasse. Although the two fleets were so long opposed to each other, and fought several engagements of considerable severity, they both appear to have acted somewhat on the defensive and were unwilling to bring on a decisive action. This indeed had always been the French policy, to be content with moderate advantage, to avoid risking all in one battle, and by skilful manœuvring preserve ships and men for future needs.

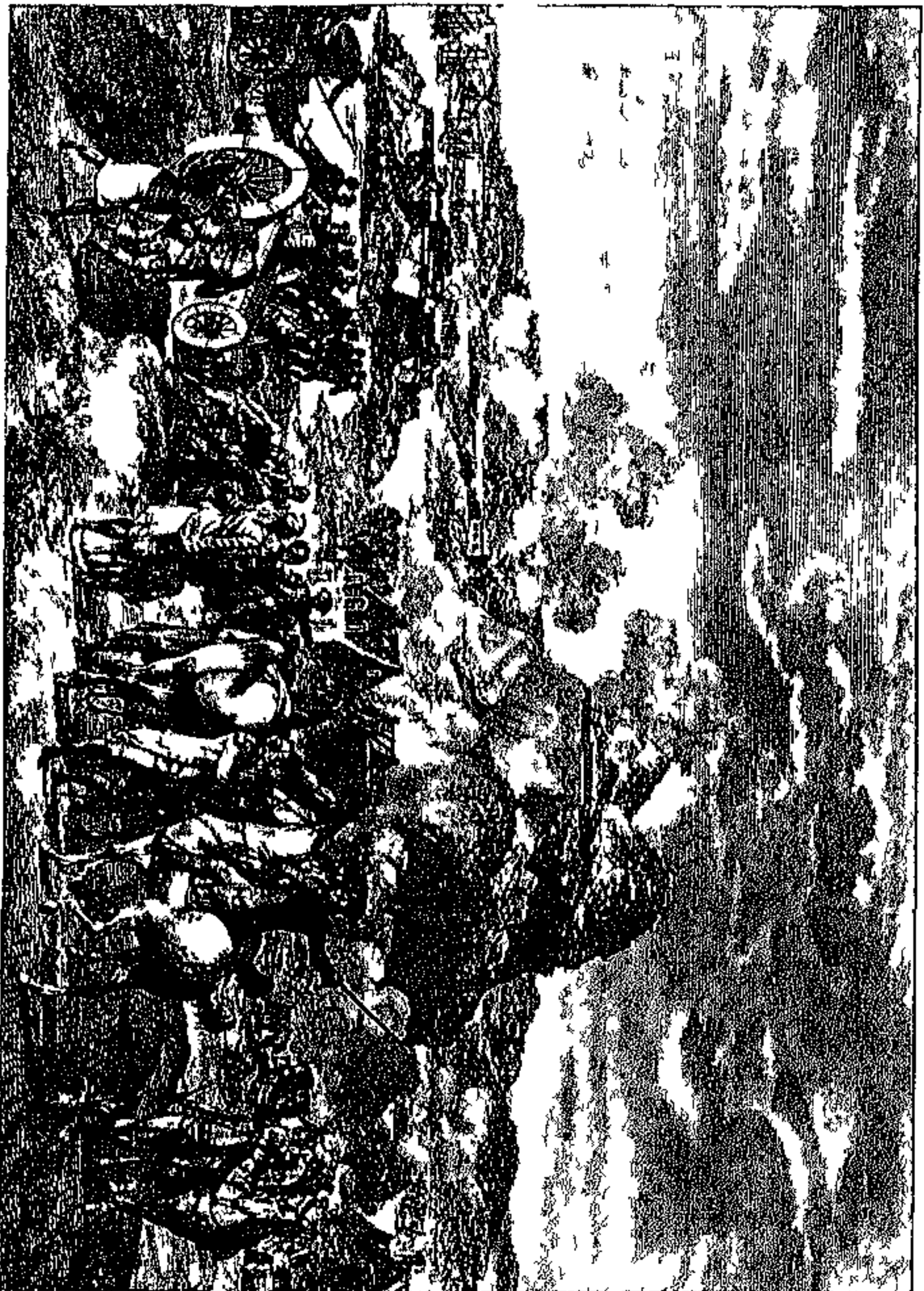
## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

Hood succeeded in enticing De Grasse away from his anchorage where he was covering the siege of St. Christopher, and then pushed by him under full sail and seized the anchorage ground De Grasse had left, cutting him off from access to the island. It was the same manœuvre Hood had recommended to Graves when De Grasse left his anchorage in Chesapeake Bay. The French sailed up to Hood, attacking his anchored ships in most gallant style, but accomplishing no result. His position was too strong and well secured. But while De Grasse was unable to retake his anchorage ground he nevertheless prevented Hood from giving any assistance to the garrison.

The siege lasted a full month, from the 11th of January to the 12th of February, 1782; and although often unnoticed in our histories was, in many respects, a more important siege than that of Yorktown, and its success was even more weakening to the Tory Ministry. The garrison defended themselves with greater skill and resolution than were shown at Yorktown, and the French soldiers were well nigh exhausted by their labors in the hot climate. One of their ammunition ships was taken by the British, and the ship with their heaviest siege artillery struck on the rocks and sunk. By great labor they fished up part of the siege artillery, brought more from Martinico and profited by a mistake of the garrison, who had left outside their works eight brass twenty-four pounders, and two thirteen-inch brass mortars, with an immense supply of ammunition, all of which fell into the hands of the French and was used against the fortifications. When the garrison at last surrendered, De Bouille, who was of the chivalrous type of French officer, refused to treat Governor Shirley and General Frazer as prisoners of war, because of their gallant conduct in defence.

The taking of such a strong island against such desperate defence, and the assistance of a large British fleet, revealed what was probably in store for the other British West Indies with France and Spain so powerful on the ocean. The Whigs, fully believing that one more debate in Parliament would now dispose of Lord North's Ministry, gave notice that they would





OLD FRENCH ENGRAVING OF THE SIEGE OF BRIMSTONE HILL IN ST. CHRISTOPHER



(over 11  
2/13/03, 1997.)

## A NEW MINISTRY FORMED

in five days again offer the same resolution of want of confidence; and on the 20th of March the House had assembled for a field day. The Ministry, Wraxall assures us, had gathered strength. Dilatory members and invalids had been summoned from all over the country; important support had been promised; there was every prospect that the administration would be supported by a much larger vote than five days before; and if they were tided over the Easter recess, which was near at hand, they could not be driven from power for at least a year.

But within a couple of hours before he arrived at the House of Commons, Lord North in an interview with the King had insisted on resigning; and when he reached the House it was only to announce that they might save themselves further trouble. The Ministry they were pursuing no longer existed; and he asked for an adjournment to enable the King to form a new administration.<sup>5</sup>

The new Ministry was headed by Lord Rockingham, and composed of Charles Fox, Lord Camden, Cavendish, Conway, the Duke of Richmond, Burke, and Barré, who had all been familiar figures in the debates of the last ten years. All were extremely liberal Whigs, who had always held those vague opinions fluctuating between moderate coercion and no coercion, which practically meant that they would leave it to the Colonies to stay within the empire, or not, as they chose. Rockingham now had an understanding with the King that he should make peace with the American States without independence, if he could, with independence if he must.

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<sup>5</sup> Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iv, pp. 220-230; Wraxall Memoirs, pp. 277-286; Stedman, "American War," vol. ii, pp. 417-429; "Operations of the French Fleet under Count de Grasse," pp. 95-103, 166-171; *Annual Register*, 1782, chaps. vii, ix, x; Clowes, "Royal Navy," vol. iii, pp. 511-519.

## CV.

### BRITISH NAVAL SUPERIORITY RESTORED BY RODNEY'S VICTORY AT GUADALOUPE

THE loyalist writers always violently denounced Parliament and the English nation for this sudden overthrow of the Tory Ministry and abandonment of the American war. It was entirely unnecessary, they said. The patriot party in America was completely exhausted, and could not stir a hand against Clinton unless De Grasse returned to the coast with a French fleet and army in the following summer.

It must be confessed that this argument receives considerable support from Washington's views of the continued seriousness of the situation in spite of the surrender of Lord Cornwallis. The argument was a natural one for the loyalists to make, because they were such heavy losers by the abandonment of the American war. To most of them that abandonment meant loss of fortune, social position, home, and country. They had everything to gain by continuing the war. But unfortunately for them the people of England, both Tory and Whig, had now everything to gain by ending the war; and we accordingly find the peace plans of the new Ministry very popular among all classes in Great Britain. A complete revolution in public opinion had taken place. Almost immediately after the fall of St. Christopher, the island of Nevis, and then the island of Montserrat, passed into the hands of France. England's colonial empire was disappearing from the map. She now had only three islands in the West Indies, Jamaica, Barbadoes and Antigua. France and Spain were in a position to take them; for besides the reinforced fleet of De Grasse a powerful Spanish fleet and army were collecting in Cuba and in Hispaniola.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Wixall, *Memoirs*, p. 301; Stedman, "American War," vol. ii, p. 430.

## IMPORTANCE OF INDIA

If the American war were stopped, England could devote her exclusive attention to France and Spain, and save from them the remains of her empire. Even a temporary truce for negotiations in the American war would check the present aggressions and relieve the danger of the situation; for, while France and Spain were taking part in the negotiations, England might profit, through some circumstance, in the delay. The business sense of the Anglo Saxon is always keen for the ultimate chance, and, although heroic and enduring in war, well knows when there has been enough.

Greater things than the American provinces were at stake. India was just being conquered and that docile people have been worth more in wealth and power to Great Britain than a hundred Americas. But if France and Spain, following up the surrender at Yorktown, and achieving victory after victory in Eustatius, St. Christopher, Montserrat, Nevis, and Minorca, should sweep up the rest of the British West Indies, would they not then proceed to India?

Anything rather than jeopardize India. From England's point of view it was surely better to sacrifice the poor loyalists rather than run any risk in India. Why should the golden storehouse in the Indies be lost for the sake of a possible conquest of American patriots, who, even if conquered, would be more troublesome to rule than the Irish?

The promptness with which France and Spain had followed up the success at Yorktown was quite remarkable. French and Spanish troops never fought with more persistence and determination than at Eustatius, Minorca and St. Christopher. The governments and officers of our two allies saw the opportunity of forcing England's hand and they did it with complete energy and success.

Not knowing of this zeal, and least of all of this success, Washington, in March, and as late as April, 1782, was still of the opinion that we could not hope to end the war that year. Only incomplete information of the events in the West Indies had reached him, and no information of what had happened in Parliament. He heard early in March that the French had

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

begun their attack on St. Christopher and that a naval engagement was going on between De Grasse and Hood. The first reports from St. Christopher were apparently unfavorable; for he describes himself and others as in an "anxious state of suspense disagreeable beyond description." Certainly if De Grasse should be defeated by Hood, his fleet shattered and St. Christopher saved for England, there would be no French naval superiority on our coast that coming summer, and our patriot cause would be hopeless.<sup>2</sup>

The fall of St. Christopher, coupled with the ability of De Grasse to hold his own against Hood, constituted a most momentous event which settled two crucial points: the naval superiority on the American coast for the coming summer, and the inability of England to withstand the threatening clean sweep by France and Spain in the West Indies.

On the 22nd of April, Holland openly recognized the separate existence of the United States by accepting John Adams as a minister plenipotentiary. The Whig party in England and their new minister had made every effort to stop the American war; had abandoned active fighting in America, and had held out offers of peace. It was none too soon; for now Holland was preparing to take a very active part in the combinations for the summer of 1782; and the whole naval marine of France, Spain and Holland were expected to rendezvous at Brest and threaten England in her home waters. The new Whig Ministry must prove itself capable of defending England against this new danger, and fresh plans for great naval operations were prepared.

The allies appear to have intended that the rendezvous at Brest should follow the destruction of England's power in the West Indies, where the French and Spanish fleets amounted to sixty ships of the line accompanied by large land forces. They far outnumbered the British forces in Jamaica, which was to be the next object of their attack.

In February, 1782, before the new Ministry was formed,

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<sup>2</sup> Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. ix, pp. 462, 464, 473.



## DE GRASSE AND RODNEY

Admiral Rodney's fleet had attempted to intercept the great convoy of naval supplies going from France to the West Indies. But although Rodney spread out his ships in long lines to cover nearly the whole ocean, the French convoy eluded them and safely reached De Grasse. The fleets of Rodney and Hood now combined under the command of Rodney at St. Lucia and numbered 36 ships of the line, while the fleet of De Grasse at Fort Royal Bay numbered 35 of the line, and five thousand land forces. The advantage in naval force was slightly in favor of the English and everything, the whole result of seven years of war, depended on Rodney being able to strike and cripple De Grasse before he could join the Spanish fleet under Don Solano at Hispaniola. If once De Grasse reached Hispaniola, the combined fleets would number 60 vessels with two good-sized armies on board, and Jamaica was doomed.

De Grasse left Fort Royal at daybreak on the 8th of April, with a large convoy, and made all sail for Hispaniola. But the British fleet instantly pursued and had overhauled him by the following morning. A battle began about 9 o'clock with the advantage in favor of the French, for the centre and rear of the British fleet lay becalmed. De Grasse concentrated his fire on the van, commanded by Hood, and by long range shooting injured it severely in rigging. About 2 o'clock in the afternoon he withdrew entirely from the action, and, though he had suffered no little damage, he appears to have dealt so severely with his enemy that they could not again overtake him, and the next day his fleet could be seen by the British sailors only when they climbed to the mast-head. The English ships being copper bottomed were usually free from barnacles and seaweed and faster than the French vessels, which though built on better lines were seldom coppered. But in the present instance the French practice of firing at the rigging instead of the hull, no doubt caused this check in the pursuing power of the British.

Everything seemed to indicate that De Grasse, with that cleverness which he had shown for the last year, had escaped and would effect his junction with the Spanish fleet. He had

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

kept his own fleet well together by the practice common at that time of towing or protecting any slow or crippled ship that was falling behind. On the morning of the 12th the "Zélé," which had fouled several of the French fleet and had been badly injured, was seen by the English making her way to Guadaloupe in tow of a frigate. Rodney ordered a chase to capture her, and De Grasse bore down with his whole fleet to save her.

De Grasse has been severely criticised for not abandoning the "Zélé" and keeping steadfastly to his main object of effecting a junction with the Spanish fleet, which, if once accomplished, would have deprived England of all her West India possessions. But if on the preceding two or three days he had adopted this plan of abandoning slow or crippled vessels, he would, his defenders say, have lost three or four of his fleet and if he went on abandoning such vessels he would lose a considerable portion of his ships before he reached the Spaniards. He was now merely continuing a conservative plan of keeping his fleet intact which had heretofore proved itself prudent and successful.

The fleets were now lying between the islands of Guadaloupe and Dominique, and at 7 o'clock began firing as their lines approached each other and passed in opposite directions. De Grasse, it is said, saw an opportunity to crush Rodney's van, which was separated from the centre, and gave the order to come upon the same tack as the English; but the French line was in disorder and the command was not obeyed. Subsequent orders were also disregarded, and, according to what seems to be De Grasse's own account of the action, his captains fought the battle as they pleased.

The French gunners fired at the rigging while the British fired at the hulls; and as the French ships were crowded with both troops and sailors, the better effect of hull firing was soon apparent. At noon Rodney broke the French line by sailing three or four of his ships through its centre. This destroyed the French formation and soon afterwards the British fleet passed to windward of the French and had the weather gage.



OLD FRENCH ENGRAVING OF THE SURRENDER OF DE GRASSE TO RODNEY  
(Engraved by Thoinston for Brinard's History of England)

*L. K. M.*



## BATTLE OF GUADALOUPE

De Grasse having now lost all advantage of the wind and a regular battle order, his defence degenerated to mere individual exertions without a general plan. He could no longer manœuvre in the French manner and avoid a decisive result. The engagement became a terrible merciless contest like the battle of the Dutch and English on the Dogger Bank. The sea was strewn with bodies, and shoals of sharks could be seen tearing men from the wreckage. Several French ships were cut to pieces and dismasted before they would surrender. But such heroism was all in vain. De Grasse himself finally surrendered his flagship, the "Ville de Paris," just at sunset when he and two others were the only men left standing on the upper deck.<sup>5</sup>

Five of the French ships had been taken, but the remainder, owing to Rodney's unwillingness to pursue, escaped. They might, it has been supposed, still have joined the Spaniards in taking Jamaica; but they made no such attempt. Rodney's victory remained the great naval battle of that age, the worst sea fight, it was said, since the invention of gunpowder, the talk and wonder of the world for a generation, the death blow to a great scheme of conquest by France and Spain, and the salvation of British sea power. It restored upon the ocean the ascendancy of the British flag, which had seemed on the point of being humbled by the navies of France and Spain. For some years the French had intercepted English convoys, threatened English ports and dominated even the waters of the English Channel. But Rodney turned back this tide of events. French naval power has never been able to recover from the shock; and his victory has sometimes been described as compensating England for the loss of the American colonies.

For Rodney it was a stupendous personal success.

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<sup>5</sup> Stedman, "American War," vol. ii, pp. 430-435; *Annual Register*, 1782, chap. ix; Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iv, pp. 269-278, Wraxall, *Memoirs*, pp. 304-309; Clowes, "Royal Navy," vol. iii, pp. 519-537; "Operations of the French Fleet under Count de Grasse," pp. 114-127, 174-180, 197, 200. The last Journal in "Operations of the French Fleet" is supposed to have been written by De Grasse himself as his defence.



## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

" They said that he seated himself in an arm-chair, placed on the quarter deck of the *Formidable*, as the moon rose, in order to indulge his sight with the view of the Ville de Paris, which lay near him in a disabled state, and whose sides overtopped those of his own vessel. And they added that he burst into expressions or exclamations of extravagant self-praise and complacency; mingled with some reproaches on the want of ministerial gratitude, which he had experienced for his past services." (Wraxall, *Memoirs*, p. 307.)

He was not a popular or pleasing character like Nelson. He talked perpetually of himself, and was always the hero of his own story. The Whig Ministry, not expecting his wonderful victory, were preparing to punish him, as an untrustworthy Tory naval officer, whose carelessness had lost Yorktown, and who had plundered and ill-treated English merchants at Eustatius. Burke was preparing a prosecution of him in the Commons, and the Ministry had already sent out Pigot to supersede him. The prosecution in the Commons was, of course, dropped. But in spite of the unpopularity of superseding Rodney after his great victory, Pigot went out to take his place.

Rodney's fortune, however, was made. He was elevated to the peerage, and his naval career closed. For the rest of his days he lived a gouty, irascible, outspoken life, plagued to his last hour, and impoverished by suits for damages by the English merchants whom he had plundered at Eustatius.

If his victory had been won a month or two sooner, the North Ministry would probably not have resigned and the American war might have been indefinitely prolonged with no French fleet to assist the patriots. This destruction of De Grasse's fleet was the very thing that Washington had feared was impending at St. Christopher. As we can now see in looking backward, it had happened too late to do us much harm. But at the time it was by no means clear that it would not after all work our ruin.

De Grasse, on whom for a year and more the American cause had depended, was beaten and a prisoner of war; and for some years he could not appear in public in France without being insulted. He had had on board his fleet the whole train of heavy siege artillery intended for the reduction of Jamaica.

## LOYALIST ARGUMENT

He had lost that invaluable artillery; he had lost the French naval superiority in the West Indies; he had lost the chance of France having the advantage in a peace negotiation; and, if it had not been that the previous success of himself and De Bouille had overthrown the Tory Ministry in England, his misfortune might have ruined the patriot cause in America.

A new forcefulness was now added to the loyalist argument that Parliament had abandoned the American war too soon. They had abandoned it on the last day of February in a panic, and on the 20th of March the Ministry had resigned over the comparatively slight reverses of Yorktown, Minorca and St. Christopher. But if they had only waited, said the loyalists, until after the 12th of April, when Rodney destroyed the French naval superiority and took prisoner the French admiral who had made the Yorktown and St. Christopher disasters possible, they would have seen all cause for panic and abandonment wiped away.

The military men who had recommended, in 1778, that Britain withdraw her troops and fleets from the American continent and concentrate them in completely crushing France in the West Indies, now pointed to Yorktown and Rodney's victory, as proof of the wisdom of their plan. By their plan, they said, a victory like Rodney's would have come earlier in the war, and by destroying the French naval forces would have cut the French entirely out of their alliance with America, would have prevented them sending the fleet which brought about the surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown, and would have given Britain full opportunity to concentrate all her forces on the annihilation of the American patriot party.<sup>4</sup>

But England had now gone too far to take any advantage of Rodney's victory. She had deliberately and formally abandoned the American war without stipulating any conditions except such as should be mutually agreed upon in the negotiation. Measures to start the negotiation had been begun; the English people approved this course; they had grown tired

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<sup>4</sup>Tarleton, Narrative, p. 2.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

of the war as a useless expense and a dangerous policy; they could no longer be alarmed by the loss of the American trade; they no longer believed that the Americans by withholding trade could starve them to death; they had been without that trade for nearly ten years and had developed other branches of commerce and industry which, they thought, might become equally as valuable.

Immediately after his victory Rodney had hurried his fleet to Jamaica, believing that it might still be attacked by such ships of the enemy as could be collected. The war, however, was ended in the West Indies. Nothing more was done by the allies except that the Spaniards succeeded in taking the small British settlement in the Bahamas.

All the ships of Rodney and Hood were now needed to maintain the new state of affairs in the West Indies; and this left so few vessels for the protection of the English Channel that the fleets of the three allies might yet be able to attack England in her home waters. They had already become so powerful in European waters that their own convoys of merchantmen, both outward and inward bound, were perfectly safe while the British convoys were at their mercy. In June they caught the outward bound Newfoundland and Quebec fleets; and they were undoubtedly watching for the richer and larger inward bound convoy from Jamaica.

The main object of the Whig administration was to save those great commercial convoys, so important to the business and prosperity of the times. They must threaten Holland so that she would keep her fleet at home. They must relieve Gibraltar from the Spanish siege, and prevent the allies from attacking India.

Lord Howe, with a small squadron, so threatened the Dutch coast, that the Holland fleet returned and remained in the Texel. Other squadrons under Ross, Barrington and Kempenfelt protected the channel by avoiding an action with the superior fleets of the allies; and in the end of July the Jamaica convoy with De Grasse on board as a prisoner arrived in safety at Portsmouth. The Baltic convoy also escaped capture.

## DANGER TO INDIA

But nothing had been done to relieve Gibraltar. In India Sir Eyre Coote had again routed Hyder Ali; but this had been followed by the surrender to the natives of a British force of 2300 and the appearance on the Indian coast of a French fleet of 22 sail.

News of the serious danger to India reached England in July and seems to have been decisive in determining the Ministry to increase their efforts for securing a general peace with the allies as well as with America before the situation grew worse. The American envoys had already announced that they would make no peace except with the consent of France. There must, therefore, be a general peace or none. Rodney's victory would still give England considerable advantage in a peace negotiation. But if that advantage were not seized at once, the good effect of the victory would wear away or a disaster in India might altogether destroy its effects.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iv, pp. 279-284; Wraxall, *Memoirs*, p. 324; *Annual Register*, 1782, chapters i, ii, iii, iv; 1783, chapters ii, iii, iv.



## CVI.

### FIRST ATTEMPTS AT PEACE

ONE of the first acts of the new Whig Ministry had been to accept Clinton's resignation, which he had allowed to lie in the hands of the Government for several years. He received word of this acceptance and returned to England during the last days of April, 1782; and about a week afterwards, on the 5th of May, his successor, Sir Guy Carleton, arrived in New York. Carleton had been no doubt selected as an officer whose reputation for humanity and kindness would have a favorable effect in America, dispose the people to end hostilities and gain easy terms for Great Britain.

Up to the beginning of May no news had reached America of the overthrow of the Tory Ministry on the 20th of March, or of Rodney's victory at Guadaloupe on April 12th. On the 4th of May Washington wrote, "all my accounts from Europe concur in declaring that the British King and Ministry are still determined to prosecute the war." But two or three days afterwards he read the full accounts of the recent debates in Parliament which came over at the same time as Carleton. He learned of the change of Ministry and of the act authorizing the King to make a peace with America by suspending the operation of any objectionable Acts of Parliament.

A careful study of this information and of all the documents Carleton sent him had no effect in changing Washington's mind. He believed that the new Ministry would still prosecute the war, that they had no intention of acknowledging American independence, and that the offer of a peace or truce was similar to the offer in 1778, intended to relax our people from military effort, draw them off from their connection with France, and produce a state of inactivity which would leave the Ministry free to carry on the war in other parts of the world with greater vigor.



## GRENVILLE'S PROPOSAL

He saw great danger from this insidious offer in the weak and exhausted state of the patriots. They were already, he said, in a stupor; and they would now, he thought, cease to make the slightest effort. We can understand his anxiety when we read the letters of the time, describing the condition of destitution, nakedness and revolt into which the patriot forces both North and South had sunk. The Northern army was incapable of making a march of one day. They were sometimes three days without food; were constantly plotting mutiny, and held down only by the severest measures of their officers and the execution of a ringleader. The enemy, said Washington, could now easily take the Hudson Highlands.<sup>1</sup>

He continued to hold these opinions for several months and the same opinions were entertained by the French Court. Vergennes hastened to warn the patriot Americans of the danger of this new move by England. A secret emissary from the English Government had, he said, recently come to Paris and offered as terms of peace that the English should retain as colonies those parts of America in which they still had military posts, in return for which France was to receive certain concessions at Dunkirk and in India.

This emissary was apparently young Thomas Grenville, whose father had introduced in Parliament the famous stamp act. When his proposals were rejected by Vergennes on the ground that no peace could be made without the knowledge, participation and consent of the United States, Grenville answered that England could not recognize the independence of the United States, but would be glad to make a treaty with France without involving the affairs of America.<sup>2</sup>

In a similar way, David Hartley, a venerable Whig of philanthropic intentions and very kindly character, was sent over to Paris to make the same proposal of a separate peace to

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<sup>1</sup> *Writings of Washington*, Ford edition, vol. x, pp. 2, 3, 8, 9, 10, 11, 30. Gordon, "*American Revolution*," edition 1788, vol. iv, pp. 201-204; Lee, *Memoirs*, vol. ii, p. 459.

<sup>2</sup> *Writings of Washington*, Ford edition, vol. x, p. 12 note.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

Franklin, with whom he had long carried on a friendly correspondence on American affairs. But Franklin, of course, took the same ground as Vergennes, that America could make no peace except in concert with France.<sup>8</sup>

A separate peace was also tried with Holland; but the offer was refused because the Dutch saw at once that their best advantage lay in negotiating in concert with France and Spain. The American Congress was also tested to see if they would negotiate separately. As soon as Carleton arrived at New York he attempted to open negotiations with the Congress; but that body refused to listen and directed Washington to refuse a safe conduct to Carleton's messenger. All negotiations must take place in concert with France. American representatives, Franklin, Adams and Jay, were already in Europe and prepared to act with the French Court.

Carleton then attempted to negotiate with the governors of the States. It was the old plan, which had been so often tried by England, for breaking up the American union by making separate treaties with two or three of the States. But it failed again as it had always failed.

Carleton then appealed directly to the people through the newspapers, calling on them to elect new members of the Congress, which as at present constituted was under the thumb of France. He pictured the amiable disposition of England, so ready for reconciliation, peace and kindness. He treated all Americans who fell into his hands with the greatest consideration; allowed the wives of the captains of captured privateers to come to New York to visit their husbands; and with much affectation of graciousness would set the captains at liberty when the wives asked it.

He promised the return of the prisoners who had been so long confined in England; and in August about seven hundred of them arrived. Some of them, owing to the difficulties of exchanging privates, had been imprisoned in England from the beginning of the war. They described their condition as

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<sup>8</sup> Parton, "Life of Franklin," vol. viii, p. 450.

## ANGRY LOYALISTS

greatly improved after Burgoyne's surrender, which placed in the hands of the Americans so many Englishmen on whom retaliation could be taken. But during most of their confinement they had been treated as state criminals awaiting trial for treason and fed on criminals' fare. With the change of Ministry they were at once treated as prisoners of war; and several of the new Ministry came to see them, gave them money, shook hands with them, and called them brothers.

Just before the arrival of the prisoners, Carleton had abandoned all efforts to secure a separate peace; and on the 2nd day of August, 1782, informed Washington that England had consented to negotiate a general peace at Paris, that Laurens had been set free from the Tower, and that all prisoners were to be sent home.

When the loyalists in New York heard of this announcement, which meant of course the end of the war, their grief and rage is said to have been frantic. Up to this moment they had believed that the contest might be continued and their property and position preserved. Those who were in the British army tore the lapels from their coats and stamped them under their feet, and the curses and execrations against the mother country, for abandoning to destitution those who had risked all for her, were so violent that special efforts had to be made to quiet them. They were warned that their rage might lose them all future claim to recompense. But the patronizing officiousness of this argument must have maddened them all the more. Nor was it very soothing to have to listen to the hypocrisy of those hackneyed words about a continuance of "loyalty and dutiful obedience," under which they had fought, suffered and lost everything.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. x, pp. 14, 16, 52, 53; Gordon, "American War," edition 1788, vol. iv, pp. 204-207; Wraxall, *Memoirs*, p. 202; *Annual Register*, 1783, chapters v, vii.

## CVII.

### SUSPICIOUS CHARACTER OF THE OVERTURES FOR PEACE

WHILE it was entirely true, as Carleton had announced to Washington, that negotiations for a general peace had been begun in Paris, yet these negotiations were carried on during the whole summer and autumn of 1782, and their result was not known in America until March, 1783. In all that time there was no formal cessation of hostilities and great uncertainty as to England's intentions and the final outcome of the negotiations.

Carleton's language was all humanity and kindness. But Admiral Digby, who was now in command on the coast, was very diligent in capturing American vessels and subjecting their crews to great suffering to compel them to enlist in the British navy. The English and Indians in Canada moved southward to Oswego, scalping and burning with very threatening intent. A small French fleet of thirteen ships of the line came to the coast in August, followed and kept from any useful purpose by a superior British fleet. In the South, Colonel Brown, in command of the British garrison at Savannah, made a sally to attack Wayne, who by a bold manœuvre got between Brown and the garrison and routed the whole British party. Shortly afterwards the Creek Indians surprised Wayne at night, but were beaten off with heavy loss.

In the waters of India the two small French and English fleets fought numerous battles with the advantage in the end decidedly in favor of the French. At Gibraltar the Spaniards were making vast efforts for a final attack. Floating batteries constructed of cork and the heaviest timbers, long soaked in water, with wet sand between the partitions, were prepared at great expense. Pipes leading all over them, and fed with constant streams of water by powerful pumps, were expected to



## ATTACK ON GIBRALTAR

protect all the woodwork from hot shot, which was Gibraltar's principal means of defence. To protect the floating batteries from descending shells and grape-shot they had roofs of rope netting covered with wet hides.

Besides these floating batteries, twelve hundred heavy siege guns were in readiness, and also mortars, light artillery and 83,000 barrels of powder. Fifty French and Spanish ships of the line were assembled, hundreds of smaller vessels, and a great army of troops. It was the most remarkable attempt that had ever been made to take by storm the most impregnable stronghold of the world, the rock of the British Empire, guarding the Mediterranean and the East.

Military men, courtiers, princes, noblemen and travellers from all Europe, came to take part as volunteers or to gratify their curiosity in beholding such a wonderful military and naval spectacle. The scene became one of fashion and social splendor, wherein were exhibited some of those chivalrous amenities of ancient warfare which were still admired. Intercepted letters of officers of the garrison were returned to them. Flattering expressions of regard were conveyed to General Eliot. He was asked to accept presents of fruit, ice and partridges for the gentlemen of his household; and as he himself was known to live entirely on vegetables, his enemies asked to be informed of the kinds he liked best, with a view to his regular supply.

Meanwhile, Admiral Howe sailed from England on the 11th of September with a great fleet of thirty-three ships, with troops and supplies to relieve the garrison; and General Eliot decided to anticipate the stupendous attack which the allies decided to make before Admiral Howe could arrive. Eliot's main defence, besides the naturally impregnable nature of the rock of Gibraltar, was in his elaborate furnaces and machinery for heating and firing red hot cannon balls. On the 8th of September he began a furious cannonade with these hot balls, carcasses and shells, upon the Spanish works on the land side, which were soon on fire in fifty places, and two of the batteries were completely destroyed.



## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

This aroused the allies to begin their attack in earnest. They repaired their batteries during the night, and planted a new one of 64 heavy guns; and for nearly a week these land batteries alone cannonaded Gibraltar at the rate of 6500 cannon shot and 1080 shells every 24 hours. Besides this, there was the attack by the fleet and the gunboats, the mortar-boats, and boom ketches, all pouring showers of missiles from every kind of firearm, from siege guns down to howitzers, with the intention of exhausting the garrison by assailing every part of the works at the same time.

The surrounding hills became covered with spectators as day after day this extraordinary bombardment continued, becoming magnificent beyond description, as Eliot replied in all directions to every part of the attack by showers of hot missiles which filled the air, and 4000 of which fell in the course of one day on the floating batteries alone. He seemed to have turned the whole rock into a honey-comb of furnaces for preparing these projectiles of which he had apparently unlimited supplies.

The floating batteries, with their peculiar construction of wet hides and streams of water running through pipes, resisted for a long time the hot balls from the rock. But in the end no human contrivance could withstand the enormous quantity of these burning balls which Eliot was capable of throwing. One by one the floating batteries caught fire and as they could not be towed away, the efforts of the rest of the fleet were directed to rescuing the crews by small boats during the night. This was partially effected, and might have been completed if the British marine brigade in small gunboats had not sallied out and driven off the rescuers.

When morning dawned the floating batteries were still burning with their crews in the midst of the flames crying for help or clinging to wreckage in the water. The cannonade from the rock was stopped and the British marine brigade in its turn became a rescuing party in a strange scene which was still dangerous, for as the loaded guns on the floating batteries became heated by the fire they were discharged, and every now and then,

## HOWE SAVES GIBRALTAR

as the fire reached a magazine, the ship with its guns and men was blown into the air.

The great assault on Gibraltar had failed, and the allies now hoped to bring the garrison to a surrender for want of ammunition and provisions. This could be effected by cutting off Admiral Howe's fleet, which for several weeks had been beating its way through bad weather and contrary winds. There was every prospect of a great naval engagement like that of Rodney's except that the odds were very much against Howe with only 33 ships of the line against the 50 sail of the allies.

Strange to say, the same sort of luck which saved Admiral Howe from a naval battle with the French off Newport in the autumn of 1778 occurred again at Gibraltar. Just as he arrived on the 10th of October a great gale arose, driving three of the allied vessels ashore and scattering the rest in the Mediterranean. Before they could be collected Howe landed his supplies of provisions and ammunition, as well as reinforcements of troops, and the garrison was again in condition to stand a longer siege than the allies would now be inclined to make. Howe, well satisfied with his work, avoided a general engagement; and after some indecisive long range firing made the best of his way back to England.

This relief of Gibraltar occurring in October, 1782, coupled with British successes over Hyder Ali in India and the capture of the prosperous Dutch spice settlements and forts at Trincomalee in the island of Ceylon, was of great assistance to England in the general peace negotiations at Paris. Both England and the allies had been willing to keep up the negotiations and the fighting at the same time; but England, with Rodney's victory at Guadaloupe and Howe's relief of Gibraltar to her credit, was getting rather the better of this peculiar method.<sup>1</sup>

In America Washington again lost faith in the overtures

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<sup>1</sup> Wraxall, *Memoirs*, p. 326; Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iv, pp. 316-331; Stedman, "American War," vol. ii, pp. 438-445; *Annual Register*, 1782, chap. x, Stillé, "Life of Wayne," p. 289.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

for peace; for if England kept on gaining advantages in both fighting and negotiation, she might decide to take up again the subjugation of her former colonies. She had withheld her attacks upon them only for the moment in order that her hands might be free to deal with France and Spain.

The Rockingham Ministry, our supposed friends, have been criticised for leaving us in this predicament. But although they were Whigs, and had spoken in our favor, they were after all Englishmen and compelled to act from the English standpoint. As a matter of fact they were now by no means so favorably inclined towards America as their language when they were in the minority had led our people to suppose. They wanted to keep America for England if they could. The subjugation of America by force might now be too expensive or too difficult; but if America could be induced by circumstances of diplomacy to remain within the British empire, that were a consummation devoutly to be wished, and would be entirely in accord with Whig principles. Why should Whigs hasten to offer the Americans independence, when within a few months the Americans might be willing to take less?

The Whigs, when in the minority, had spoken contemptuously of the importance of retaining American trade. Some of them had said that America independent would trade more with England than America colonial. But now it seemed as if it might be well to retain some slight control of America for the sake of trade. The phrase British empire is merely a translation into political language of the commercial phrase British trade. England to this day retains control of alien peoples by means of protectorates or "spheres of influence" which in the aggregate are of no little importance to British commerce; and Canada and the Australian commonwealths, though held by a seemingly slight political control, are sufficiently-controlled for purposes of British trade.

We can now read the secret instructions which the Whig Ministry gave to Carleton. He was, first of all, to make preparations for withdrawing the garrisons from New York, Charleston, Savannah and their dependencies. This was in exact

## WHIG INTENTIONS

accord with Whig principles, announced over and over again during the war and embodied in motions offered in Parliament by Lord Chatham, that the first step should be to withdraw the troops from America and then negotiate with the colonists about remaining in the empire.

Having been told to prepare for withdrawing the garrisons, Carleton is instructed to use every means "of reconciling the minds and affections of his Majesty's American subjects by such open and generous conduct as may serve to captivate their hearts and remove every suspicion of insincerity." He is also told to use his own discretion as to the mode and time of withdrawing the garrisons. This apparently meant that he was to be in no great hurry about it; and if attacked by a formidable force it would be better to capitulate than resist and suffer heavy loss; for the great object was to preserve the troops for service elsewhere. He was to make use of every circumstance "which can tend to revive old affections or extinguish late jealousies." But there is not a word about independence.<sup>2</sup>

Washington heard in May of Rodney's naval victory at Guadaloupe, and he became more anxious than ever, wondering if England would after all so far prevail as to be able to offer America a hard compromise without independence. In September he heard even worse news, for it was announced in America that Lord Rockingham had died and that Fox, Burke and other extreme Whigs had left the Ministry. In place of Rockingham the King had appointed as Prime Minister Lord Shelburne, who had declared that "the sun of Great Britain will set the moment American independency is acknowledged."<sup>3</sup>

The Rockingham Ministry would have soon gone to pieces. The death of its head merely precipitated its resignation. Its members were not agreed among themselves. Several of them, notably Fox, were very much disliked by the King; and all of them were of a reforming type of Whig which seemed very

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<sup>2</sup> Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. x, p. 15 note.

<sup>3</sup> Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. x, pp. 77, 81; Wrayall, *Memoirs*, p. 318.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

radical to most Englishmen. The new Prime Minister, Lord Shelburne, was a man of considerable ability, of long experience in statecraft, a great friend of the King; but very much disliked in Parliament for his lack of integrity. His rise to power at the head of a less liberal section of the Whigs, and his perfect accord with the King on the subject of independence, coupled with the long delay in the peace negotiations and the continuance of fighting, very naturally raised doubts and misgivings in America.

Both Washington and Rochambeau prepared for another campaign. The French army, which had wintered in Virginia, began to move northward in July to avoid the hot season, and in September joined Washington at the Hudson Highlands. The object of this was to threaten the British in New York and prevent them sending detachments against the French in the West Indies.

As winter began it became evident that the British intended to make heavy detachments from Charleston to the West Indies. They had already detached a fleet in that direction; and the French army accordingly marched into New England as if to take up winter quarters there, but really for the purpose of embarking at Boston to protect the West Indies. They sailed from Boston on the 24th of December, and the little patriot army under Washington was left alone to defend America.<sup>4</sup>

At the same time that the news of Howe's relief of Gibraltar reached America it was learned that the French had destroyed the British settlements and factories in Hudson's Bay to the amount of \$2,500,000. This balancing of advantages and disadvantages would, it was hoped, increase the chances for a general peace. But as winter passed and spring approached, without any change in the situation, Washington's opinion of England's intentions, expressed some months before, seemed to be confirmed.

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<sup>4</sup> Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. x, pp. 29, 30, 40, 43, 44, 48, 52, 54, 58, 64, 87, 95, 96, 100, 102, 103, 116, 121, 123, 124, 129, 130, 131, 139.



## UNCERTAINTY OF PEACE

"I have long thought, and still think, they are trying the chapter of accidents. . . . If they can obtain any advantage at sea, or in the Indies—East or West, no matter where—I am of opinion they will continue the war." (Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. x, p. 95.)

In January, 1783, no word of peace having arrived, Washington thought that if they did not hear of it soon there would be at least one more campaign. He believed that the Ministry, having learned what terms could be obtained, would leave it to Parliament to say whether the terms should be accepted or the American war continued; and Parliament might very likely vote to continue the war.

It was not until the 12th of March that word reached Philadelphia that the commissioners at Paris had on the 30th of November agreed upon provisional articles of peace between England and America, which would take effect if terms could be settled between France and England. This left matters still in doubt and indicated that the European powers were having great difficulty in coming to a general peace. But America's terms with England, if they could be carried out, were highly satisfactory.

## CVIII.

### A PROVISIONAL TREATY WITH ENGLAND IS SECURED

THE two treaties, the American and the general one with France and Spain, judged by their effect on modern civilization, were in some respects the most momentous treaties that have ever been negotiated. They largely created the present conditions in both North and South America. Men otherwise obscure became famous through their connection with them; and the underlying motives and reasons, together with the details of every article and clause, are still the subject of investigation, speculation and discussion.

The first important step towards negotiation, after the fall of Lord North's Ministry in the spring of 1782, had been made, as we have already seen, by young Grenville sounding Vergennes, and Hartley sounding Franklin, to see if the alliance could be broken by America and France agreeing to negotiate separately and without supporting each other. At the same time a separate peace was attempted with Holland; and General Carleton in America attempted one with the Congress; and failing in that, tried to negotiate a peace with each separate American State.

All these attempts proving useless, a new envoy, a rich, retired old English merchant, Mr. Richard Oswald, was sent to Paris to talk over the subject with Franklin. Like Hartley he was liberal in his opinions, amiable and agreeable in character, and no doubt both he and Hartley had been selected as the sort of men who would be congenial to Franklin.

Oswald had evidently been instructed to offer recognition of American independence and see what effect that would have in lessening the demands of France. He assured Franklin that if France demanded too much, England would go on with the war. Franklin took him to see Vergennes, who was not very

## OSWALD AND GRENVILLE

definite as to the demands that would be made, but insisted that the first suggestions of terms should come from England. Oswald on returning from the interview again warned Franklin that the war would be continued unless France was reasonable in her demands. Franklin suggested that, in order to establish lasting reconciliation with America, England's first proposals should be not only independence but the cession to the United States of Canada, whose vacant lands could be sold to pay for patriot houses burnt by British troops and to indemnify the loyalists for the confiscation of their estates.

Oswald went back to England and returned to Paris in May, announcing that he was ready to treat for peace. He was to conduct the negotiation with Franklin for a treaty with America, and Thomas Grenville, who arrived about the same time, was to conduct the negotiation with Vergennes for a general peace with France and Spain.

Lord Shelburne was in the Rockingham Ministry at that time, was one of the foreign secretaries, had charge of negotiations with America, and had sent Oswald to Paris. Fox was the other foreign secretary, had charge of the negotiations with France and had sent out Grenville. The two secretaries could not interfere in each other's departments, and, besides differing in opinions and belonging to different sections of the Whig party, had a strong personal antipathy to each other.

Most of the negotiation was now carried on by Grenville, who was taken by Franklin to Vergennes and had a most interesting interview. Grenville suggested that if England recognized American independence, France should be content with that, which was the original object of the war, and should be willing to restore to England the conquests she had made of British islands, and make no further demands. Vergennes smiled and replied that the offer of giving independence amounted to little. "America," he said, "does not ask it of you; there is Mr. Franklin, he will answer you as to that point."

"To be sure," said Franklin, "we do not consider ourselves as under any necessity of bargaining for a thing that is our

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

own, which we have bought at the expense of much blood and treasure, and which we are in possession of." <sup>1</sup>

Grenville, being a rather inexperienced negotiator, was much depressed by this rebuff, and in a subsequent interview with Vergennes, fared no better. He lost all hope of peace in that quarter, and turned to Franklin, whom he sounded to see if America would abandon France if the demands of Vergennes continued to be too unreasonable. Just at this time news of Rodney's naval victory at Guadaloupe arrived, which no doubt would have made Vergennes more easy in his terms; but the negotiations were suspended by several circumstances and more particularly by a dispute over the commissions of the two negotiators.

Grenville's commission, which soon arrived, authorized him to treat with France alone and contained not a word about the allies. Franklin accordingly broke off with Grenville, treated him coldly, and reserved himself for Oswald, who alone seemed to have power to negotiate with America. Vergennes also disliked the commissions; and Oswald, in a conversation with Grenville, spoke contemptuously of Fox's Rockingham party being too ready to give up everything. All this, and other unpleasant circumstances, being reported by Grenville to Fox, increased the quarrel between the two secretaries, Fox and Shelburne, who were with difficulty restrained from an open rupture. Franklin was taken sick and remained more or less incapacitated for three months. Lord Rockingham soon died, and there was confusion and delay until a new Ministry was formed with Lord Shelburne at its head.

Just before Franklin was taken sick in the end of June, John Jay, one of the other peace commissioners appointed by the Congress, arrived in Paris from Spain. There were three other commissioners: John Adams, who was representing the Congress in Holland; Henry Laurens, paroled from the Tower and in London; and Thomas Jefferson, who reached France too late to take any part in the treaty.

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<sup>1</sup> Works of Franklin, Bigelow edition, vol. viii, p. 37; Parton, "Life of Franklin," vol. ii, p. 463.

## JAY'S OBJECTION

Jay, immediately on his arrival, was taken sick and this caused a month's delay. In the meantime, the new British Ministry was formed, Grenville recalled and Alleyne Fitzherbert sent out in his place to negotiate with Vergennes. By the middle of August everything seemed ready for more negotiation when Jay raised an objection which caused another delay that consumed all the rest of the summer.

In spite of his violent opinion against American independence, Lord Shelburne and his cabinet now understood that without it there could be no peace with France. Their commission to Oswald accordingly provided that independence should be acknowledged in an article of the proposed treaty; and Franklin and Vergennes thought this sufficient. But Jay would not negotiate with a man who held a commission describing the United States as the colonies and plantations of Great Britain. He insisted that Oswald's commission should in itself recognize the independence of the United States, so that the question of independence would be settled before negotiation began, and the United States have the advantage of negotiating as a country already acknowledged to be independent, and not as a country whose independence still remained a subject of discussion. So long as her independence remained unacknowledged, America was bound to France and could not make a separate treaty with England. If England wished to negotiate separately with the United States, independence must first be acknowledged.

Jay secured the concurrence in this point of Adams, who would not leave Holland for Paris until Oswald procured the proper sort of commission; and Franklin was finally won over by Jay's reasoning. But this discussion and the efforts to convince Oswald consumed the whole summer, and it was not until the end of September that Oswald returned to Paris with a new commission.

Adams and Jay determined to negotiate with Oswald without consulting or being advised by Vergennes; and although Franklin demurred to this, and Vergennes was at first inclined to take offence on behalf of the French Court, the arrangement



## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

was finally accepted by every one. There was indeed no reason why it should not be accepted. It would probably save time; and as every one admitted that no agreement between America and England could become a binding treaty without the consent of France and until France had come to an agreement with England, no harm could result. There was also an advantage in effecting a settlement between America and England as soon as possible, because the other treaty was dependent on America having independence.

But Jay and Adams had other reasons. They were suspicious of the design of France. Jay was extremely suspicious. When he heard that Vergennes's chief secretary, Rayneval, had gone secretly to London, he thought that he had been sent to dissuade the British Ministry from acknowledging independence and also to suggest that the western boundary of the Americans be limited and that they be kept out of the Newfoundland fisheries. He sent a messenger of his own to counteract the supposed efforts of Rayneval; but only to discover in the end that Rayneval had gone to London to learn for certain if the British Government were sincere in their efforts for peace and to insist upon the independence of the United States as an essential preliminary to any negotiation.

When once begun about the 1st of October, after the arrival of Oswald's corrected commission, the negotiations proceeded vigorously all that month, and all November. Franklin, Adams, Jay, Oswald, and sometimes the Spanish Ambassador, took part, with their clerks and secretaries. Couriers and messengers were constantly posting back and forth between Paris and London, bringing dispatches, documents, evidence, or conveying inquiries for fresh instructions. Towards the close, Fitzherbert was drawn into the discussions; and just before the close Henry Laurens arrived from London, shattered in health by his long imprisonment in the Tower. He was greatly depressed by the loss of his son, Colonel Laurens, so long Washington's aide, who had recently been killed in an insignificant skirmish in South Carolina.

The Ministry were no doubt willing to be very liberal in the

## QUESTION OF BOUNDARIES

end in order to get rid of the American difficulty as soon as possible. "Almost every possible concession," says Wraxall, "was made on the part of England, merely to obtain from America a cessation of hostilities."<sup>2</sup> But nevertheless the Ministry and their envoys fought against those concessions with great persistency for two months.

Independence being conceded at the start, the first great question was of boundaries. England claimed what is now the State of Maine; and by the Quebec Act of 1774 the boundaries of Canada, it will be remembered, were drawn southward from the eastern end of Lake Erie to the Ohio River and down that river to the Mississippi, which gave to Canada the present States of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin.

South of the Ohio, England had no objection to our touching the Mississippi. But Spain wanted the western part of Tennessee, Alabama and Mississippi to remain an Indian country under a Spanish protectorate, while eastern Tennessee, Kentucky and West Virginia might remain an Indian country under the protectorate of the United States.

If this were accomplished and the United States nowhere touched the Mississippi River, Spain already holding New Orleans could claim the monopoly of the navigation of the Mississippi and keep all traders out of it except her own. In one of the dark periods of the Revolution, when Clinton was so successful in the South, the Congress had been willing to surrender all claim to the free navigation of the Mississippi, for the sake of a loan of money from Spain. But fortunately nothing definite had been done. The English claim to the Ohio and Illinois country as part of Canada and the Spanish protectorate claim to the country south of the Ohio would have confined the United States to the narrow strip of territory east of the Alleghany Mountains between Maine and Florida.

The French Court appears to have favored the Spanish claim in an indirect and unofficial way by allowing Vergennes's secretary, Rayneval, to say to Jay that his master proposed to

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<sup>2</sup> Memoirs, p. 328.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

support the Spanish demand. But Vergennes pressed the point no farther; and it is perhaps unfair to blame the French Court or accuse it of double dealing or selfishness, as has sometimes been done. As the ally of Spain, and having persuaded Spain to assist in the American war, France could not altogether disregard a request from the Spanish Court, and this request she appears to have presented in an irregular way without any particular earnestness or advocacy.<sup>3</sup>

Our commissioners, however, won a very complete victory in the question of boundaries; for the treaty as adopted, after recognizing our independence in the fullest manner, gave our northern boundary on Canada and the Great Lakes very much as it is at this day. Maine was conceded to us, as well as those States, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin, which had been given to Canada by the Quebec Act of 1774.

Our argument was that the Quebec Act had been one of the war measures of England and was now no more to be regarded than the Stamp Act or any similar parliamentary measure. Moreover, Clark having made a successful expedition into the Ohio and Illinois country and taken Kaskaskia and Vincennes, we had a claim to all that region by a title of conquest.

On the south our boundary was Florida and the 31st degree of north latitude passing a few miles north of New Orleans. Florida and the strip of country along the gulf south of the 31st degree were given to Spain. On the west we were given to the middle of the Mississippi River northwards to Canada, and being thus in control of half of that river we guaranteed, so far as we were concerned, the free navigation of it to Great Britain.

The next important consideration in the treaty was our right to share the fisheries of the Newfoundland banks in common with England. Fishing was at that time the staple industry of New England; her people were very much aroused on the subject, and if they should fail to obtain a sufficient right, were almost ready to renew the war. It was a great point

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<sup>3</sup> Ogg, "The Opening of the Mississippi," p. 396.

## NEWFOUNDLAND FISHERIES

of difficulty, causing much discussion and disagreement; and it required all the pugnaciousness of John Adams, aided by the tactful skill of Franklin and Jay, to secure a favorable settlement.

The British Ministry at first refused any concessions and were for excluding the Americans from fishing within three leagues of any of the British possessions. The American argument was that the banks were nearer to New England than to Europe. The natural right of the Americans was, therefore, stronger. They had assisted England in the wars with France which had won possession of the banks and with England they had enjoyed the use of them for many years. If only a partial limited right, or a mere liberty as Oswald at last proposed, were given, the fishermen would constantly be breaking through it, which would lead to disputes and perhaps another war. The question could never be settled except by a right to free use in common with England, which would require no elaborate regulation or rules.

The American claim was at last conceded in its full scope. The people of the United States were to "continue to enjoy unmolested the right to take fish of every kind not only on the Grand Banks and on all the other banks of Newfoundland, but also in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and on all the coasts, bays and creeks of all the other British possessions in America;" and they could dry their fish on unsettled portions of the shore.

But the most unpleasant part of the negotiation was the question of the loyalists. Public opinion in England intimated quite pointedly that the Ministry would lose their places if they failed to protect the loyalists. Oswald accordingly demanded that the confiscated loyalist estates should be restored. But it would have been difficult for him to have suggested anything that would have aroused more indignant feeling. It was the last thing which the Americans would grant.

"Receive again into our bosoms," said Franklin, "those who have been our bitterest enemies, and restore their properties who destroyed ours, and this while the wounds they have given us are still bleeding!"



## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

To return the confiscated estates would bring back to America the thousands of loyalists that had been banished. They were popularly supposed to have been the authors of the war and it would be impossible to restrain the patriot mobs from wreaking vengeance on them. Patriots who had lost relatives or friends in the war, patriots who remembered the sufferings in the English prison ships, would feel it their duty to encourage riots, assaults and insults; and there would be murders, cruelty and persecution, which the state governments would be powerless to control. Moreover, these loyalists, many of them able men, would be opposed to the establishment of republicanism, would sow dissension, subvert our free constitutions and be forever intriguing with England.<sup>4</sup>

The losses in confiscated property suffered by the loyalists were as nothing compared to the damage inflicted on the patriots by the British army under the terrible raiding system of Clinton. Not to mention the devastation of plantations in the South, whole towns had been destroyed in the North,—Charlestown, Falmouth, Norfolk, New London, Fairfield, and Kingston,—farms devastated and ruined, and the farmers killed; merchandise looted from warehouses and stores in every town from Maine to Georgia; tobacco, rice, indigo and negroes seized, and vessels and their cargoes taken on the high seas before any declaration of war. Add up these patriot losses, said Franklin, and compare them with the confiscated loyalist estates, state the account, and if the balance due is in favor of the loyalists we will pay it; but if it is in favor of the patriots do you pay it. "Give me leave, however," he said in conclusion, "to advise you to prevent the necessity of so dreadful a discussion by dropping the article."

There was also a legal difficulty in the way. The confiscation of loyalist estates had been done by the state governments, and the Congress, with which the treaty was being made, had no power to compel any state to repeal or alter its laws. A clause was, therefore, inserted in the treaty that the Congress

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<sup>4</sup> Works of Franklin, Bigelow edition, vol. vii, p. 357.



## LOYALISTS ABANDONED

would recommend to the States that confiscated property of British subjects resident in British possessions should be restored and that loyalists proper should be given certain opportunities to recover back their confiscated property. But this was all mere matter of recommendation which the States could heed or not as they pleased. There was nothing in the treaty which bound the United States to any particular line of conduct, and the clause was inserted merely to avoid ignoring the subject entirely.

Oswald and Fitzherbert held out on the fisheries and the loyalists until the last moment. Time was pressing. The Ministry must get rid of the American war so as to settle with France and Spain. The risk of losing their places by postponing the treaty and the risk of losing by making an unpopular treaty were about equal. On the 30th of November they agreed to everything and the treaty was signed provisional on a subsequent treaty being concluded with France.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> The Provisional Treaty can be read in "Treaties and Conventions Concluded between the United States of America and Other Powers since 1776," p. 370. See also the Works and Letters of Franklin, Jay and Adams; Gordon, "American Revolution," edition 1788, vol. iv, pp. 331-341; Lecky, "England in the 18th Century," vol. iv, pp. 252-268; and Ogg's "Opening of the Mississippi," on page 397 of which an excellent note will be found giving additional sources of information.

## CIX.

### PARLIAMENT OVERTHROWS THE STIELBURNE MINISTRY FOR MAKING THE TREATY

EVERYTHING the Americans demanded had been granted; and it looked as if the Ministry had all along intended to hold out until the last moment and then give everything. They felt, as Wraxall said, that they must in any event bring to an end the hostilities in America. The preamble to the treaty, as if conscious that these large concessions required some justification, explained that the controlling purpose of the document was to avoid those seeds of discord, partial advantages, and to establish such a relation between America and England as would lead to perpetual peace and harmony.

This explanation was probably true enough and the liberality of the treaty has no doubt prevented many misunderstandings, and possibly wars, between the United States and Great Britain. But mere words in a preamble could not conceal from Englishmen the vastness of the territory and privileges which this very brief and concise document swept away from them forever.

"Besides the unconditional recognition of the independence of the colonies," said Wraxall, who was then a member of Parliament, "and the cession of so many fortified places, which it is difficult to suppose that the Americans could ever have taken from us by force of arms; our abandoning the loyalists seemed in the estimation of people the most dispassionate, to affix a degree of degradation and dishonor on the nation itself." (Memoirs, p. 335.)

The cry went up from Parliament, from Whigs as well as from Tories, that every point for which Great Britain had been contending for seven years had been relinquished. They denounced not merely the abandonment of the loyalists, but the evacuation of New York and Charleston, the sacrifice of immense tracts of territory extending through twenty degrees of latitude and as many of longitude, including faithful Indian

## DEFENCE OF THE TREATY

nations, their allies, and containing incalculable commercial advantages. It was, they said, the most contemptible treaty England had ever made and its like in humiliation could not be found in all her history.<sup>1</sup>

Parliament and the nation bitterly repented of that treaty. They wrecked the Shelburne administration that had granted it; and they were so slow in evacuating some of the forts along the Canadian frontiers that there was very nearly a renewal of hostilities. They retained some of the western posts for thirteen years, nominally on the ground of ill treatment to the loyalists and of non-payment of debts due to English creditors which the treaty guaranteed. By orders in council they attempted to permit American trade to Europe only on condition of touching at English ports and paying duties; and although they had acknowledged our independence they pretended that this applied only to the land, and by the superiority of their navy they retained a suzerainty on the sea and searched our ships until the practice was stopped by the war of 1812.

The Shelburne Ministry tried to defend themselves by the argument that all the loss, humiliation and even dishonor in the treaty was not only necessary but well worth while for the sake of saving India and the West Indies. Wraxall himself in later years came round to this opinion. By giving France her main object in the war, namely, American independence, the Ministry were in a position to demand great concessions from the French Court in settling the general European treaty, which after much difficulty was concluded on the 20th of January, 1783. In that treaty we are pained to find our good ally giving up almost everything she had won during the war. She returned all the West India islands which she had taken from England with the single exception of Tobago. England returned to her St. Lucia, and removed all restrictions on Dunkirk. In India certain of France's old establishments were restored, but England had gained such an advantage there that France soon ceased to be an opponent or even a competitor in

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<sup>1</sup> Wraxall, *id.*, p. 342; *Annual Register*, 1783, chap. vii.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

that vast eastern mine of wealth upon which England still depends for her power and greatness. In the Newfoundland fisheries France was restricted to the least valuable banks. Indeed France seemed to be sacrificing herself for the sake of the United States and Spain; for Spain was given East and West Florida and Minorca.<sup>2</sup>

Jay and Adams had been very suspicious of the intentions of France, and these suspicions were echoed in certain quarters in America. But Franklin always had full confidence in our ally; and after a survey of the whole subject one is inclined to accept the view of the old philosopher whose experience of the French Court and people had covered a period of six years.

"I was so strongly impressed," he said, "with the kind assistance afforded us by France in our distress, and the generous and noble manner in which it was granted, without exacting or stipulating for a single privilege, or particular advantage to herself in our commerce or otherwise, that I could never suffer myself to think of reasonings for lessening the obligation." (Parlon, "Life of Franklin," vol. ii, p. 467.)

France took as her reward only the plain, obvious and legitimate advantage which she professed to have had in mind from the beginning. She had allied herself with us, and brought Spain into the alliance, because our independence would break off a powerful portion of the British empire, and throw to France a large share of the American trade heretofore confined to Great Britain by the Trade and Navigation Acts of Parliament.

In a word, after all had been said and done, after the nineteen years' struggle of the Revolution from 1764 to 1783, England abandoned America to save India, exchanged America for India; and with her necessities of gaining her wealth and power from countries outside her small island domain, there is no doubt that the exchange was a good one. From that moment, when in the general treaty it was settled that England was not to lose her hold on the vast wealth of India, England's power advanced with such rapid strides that it is doubtful if the patriot party in America could have broken away from her in

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<sup>2</sup> Wraxall, *Memoirs*, pp. 335, 336; *Annual Register*, 1783, chap. vii.

## INDIA MORE VALUABLE

the year 1800, with all the assistance of France, Spain and Holland. It is no metaphor to say that as the sun of Britain set in the west it rose in the east.

"Since 1783, our acquisitions and possessions in that portion of the globe have been perpetually in a state of progression. All our losses on the Delaware and on the Chesapeake have been more than compensated by our conquests on the Ganges, or on the coasts of Coromandel and Malabar. The augmentations of territory in Oude, as well as in Corah and Dooab, including Delhi itself, the metropolis of the Mogul princes; the seizure of the Carnatic; the dissolution of the Mysore monarchy in the person of Tippo Sultan; the reduction of Ceylon, and of the Cape of Good Hope, not to mention many inferior objects of attention; these prodigious accumulations of power and wealth have obliterated almost the recollection of the American struggle, and have closed all the wounds caused by that unfortunate war. An annual revenue of more than fifteen millions sterling raised in India, payable, not in paper, but in specie, together with the commerce of the East, continually poured into our harbors; enabled us, after contending for nearly twenty years with the power of France, successively wielded by Robespierre and by Bonaparte, to terminate the conflict in the most triumphant manner." (Wrexall, *Memoirs*, p. 341.)

But the Tory party and not a few Whigs of the year 1783 were unable to look at the subject in so dispassionate and broad a manner. The Ministry and the King under the English system had full authority to make treaties without consulting Parliament; and the treaties with the United States, France and Spain had been concluded and settled with due formality, and could not now be changed or recalled by Parliament. But as soon as both the treaties became fully known in the end of January, 1783, unusual interest and excitement was aroused, and it quickly became evident that the Shelburne Ministry might receive a vote of censure.

It was at this time that the coalition between Fox and Lord North, which has been so much discussed in English history, took place. Having been bitter opponents in the debates of Parliament all through the American war, and having exchanged language of the most studied abuse and insinuations of the most contemptible motives, it seemed impossible that there should ever be anything like alliance or friendliness



## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

between them. But nevertheless, to the amusement of all Europe, the love of office and its emoluments proved stronger than what had been supposed to be the most implacable personal animosity. They came together; North, able in business and debate, sound in judgment, practical in conduct, attractive in character; Fox, brilliant but very much overrated, an absurdly unlucky and reckless gambler, strong in opposition and destructive criticism but weak in practical policy, of showy and theorizing rather than of solid statesmanship. North led the Tories and Fox led the Rockingham Whigs to oust from power the Shelburne Whig Ministry that had made the treaties.<sup>8</sup>

The great debate took place on the 17th of February, 1783, and it was a *strange but instructive sight* for American patriots to see the Rockingham Whigs, on whom they had relied for seven years to give them independence, now denouncing that independence and the treaty that had given it. Fox and his Rockingham followers took back every word that in the last seven years they had said in favor of the Americans, and became the defenders of the loyalists whom for seven years they had been stigmatizing by every adjective of contempt. Our patriot party could now realize by what a narrow chance they had escaped from a nation whose most extreme liberals had no sincere belief in any independence but their own.

The general treaty of England with France and Spain was approved and ratified by the American Congress as the third ally, and nothing now prevented the provisional treaty of the 30th of November, 1782, between England and the Congress being carried into effect. This was done by a new document known in history as the Definitive Treaty, in the same words as the provisional, and signed at Paris, on the 3rd of September, 1783. England also closed the war with Holland by a separate treaty, and thus relieved herself from the last of that concert of European powers which had seemed about to destroy her whole colonial empire.

The 23rd of March, 1783, was the day the news reached America that the general treaty between England and France

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<sup>8</sup> Wraxall, *id.*, pp. 334-346; *Annual Register*, 1783, chaps. vii, viii.

## THE ARMY DISBANDED

had been signed on the 20th of January, and that the Revolutionary War which in all its phases had been going on for nineteen years was now at last ended.<sup>4</sup> There was great rejoicing. Armies disbanded, prisoners were set free on both sides; and in December Washington formally resigned his commission as general and retired to private life, as he had promised, when he took command of the patriot army before Boston in the summer of 1775.

The poor patriot soldiers suddenly turned loose from prison ships or British jails, and discharged from the army, hardly knew what to do. Many of them walked to their former homes, little companies, bound for the same neighborhood, tramping along together. But many had no homes, had lost everything, could not find work or were too sick to work. Not a few are said to have begged their way, from town to town, telling stories of the long struggle at the village inns or by firesides. Nothing could be done for them by the Congress and there was no attempt to give pensions until 1818.<sup>5</sup>

Patriotism was with them its own reward. One of them, Elijah Fisher, relates in his quaint diary, how he was discharged from the "old Jarsey prison ship" on the 9th of April in New York; and begging in the taverns made his way to Boston. Let him tell his feelings in his own illiterate way, for was it not for the sake of the wayfaring and the ordinary man that the Revolution was fought and won?

"The 10th (April, 1783) I com down by the markett and sits Down all alone, almost Desaureged, and begun to think over how that I had ben in the army, what ill success I had met with there and all so how I was ronged by them I worked for at home, and lost all last winter, and now that I could not get into any beasness and no home, which you may well think how I felt; but then Come into my mind that there wate thousands in worse sircumstances then I was, and having food and rament (I ought to) be Content, and that I had nothing to reflect on myself, and I (resolved) to do my endever and leave the avent to Pirovedance, and after that I felt as contented as need to be." (Bolton, "Private Soldier under Washington," p. 148.)

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<sup>4</sup> Writings of Washington, Ford edition, vol. x, p. 197.

<sup>5</sup> Bolton, "Private Soldier under Washington," pp. 245-248.

## CX.

### THE EFFECT OF THE REVOLUTION ON ENGLAND'S COLONIAL SYSTEM

By the success of the patriot party in America, England lost the commercial and political control of two million white colonists and a million black slaves, who have now grown to eighty million white men and ten million freedmen.

The only important or promising colony that remained to her was Canada, which, even with the addition of some 40,000 loyalists, scarcely contained 150,000 people. Besides these Canadians, England had some fourteen settlements and colonies in the West Indies, whose combined population, of all colors and races, did not reach 300,000. These West India settlements were all small and unimportant except Barbadoes and Jamaica. Then there were Gibraltar, Honduras, Gambia and Gold Coast, all of them very insignificant in numbers. In short, England's colonial population had sunk from three million and a half to about half a million.

Australia had not then been settled, nor had England obtained her present possessions in South and East Africa, Ceylon, Singapore, Cyprus, Egypt and her numerous small dependencies, protectorates and spheres of influence which are now dotted about the world. But these together with all of her present colonial population, estimated at 18,200,000, do not seemingly compensate either in numbers or quality for the loss of the 80,000,000 to which her former American colonies have grown.<sup>1</sup>

At the close of our Revolution it was a cant phrase among our people, and also among some Englishmen, that the British Empire was ruined, shorn of all its hopes of world-power in commerce and political control. But these forecasters had

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<sup>1</sup> Mulhall, *Dictionary of Statistics*, revision of 1898, p. 788; Smith, *"Wealth of Nations,"* McCulloch Edinburgh edition 1859, p. 614; *"Life and Writings of John Dickinson,"* vol. ii, p. 362.

## AMERICA WELL LOST

yet to learn the effect of the possession of India and the rise of English manufacturing industries; and it is probable that they were mistaken in supposing that American independence was necessarily an injury to England.

If England had conquered our patriot party she could not under the usual rules of humanity have put all the men, women and children of that party to death. Some few of them, like John Hancock and the Adamses, we know, were to be hung. Many would undoubtedly have been banished. A still larger number, probably all of the prominent ones, would have had their property confiscated and given to loyalists; and the loyalists supported by troops would have been put in control of the state governments. But the mass of the patriot party would have remained, just as the greater part of the Irish patriots were allowed to live when Ireland was conquered. America would have become an enormous Ireland, a great boiling volcano, a political hell of rebellions, revolutions, vengeance, assassinations, and wholesale executions, with here and there a province or a section winning its independence for a time, to go under at the next turn in the political game. The British Parliament meantime would be kept busy through the centuries passing those land acts, reform acts and crimes acts which, in the case of Ireland, have been steadily turned out for nearly seven hundred years. In a word, it is extremely doubtful whether England could have controlled America any more profitably than she has controlled Ireland.

India has been far better suited to her purpose; and in the above enumeration of England's colonies India was not included because the English never count India among their colonies and its statistics are always given separately. India is not a colony in any proper sense of the word. It is merely a military occupation of a vast territory containing 294,000,000 human beings of a so-called inferior race, the control of whom has been of untold profit and advantage to Great Britain.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> The population of British India by the Preliminary Census of 1901 has been placed at 231,085,132 and of the Native States under British control at 63,181,569; Dutt, "Economic History of India," p. 441.



## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

India is not administered through the colonial office, but by a distinct secretary and department which in 1858 succeeded to all the rights and property of the famous East India Company, which had begun to conquer India long before our Revolution.

At the close of our Revolution this conquest had progressed to a considerable degree. Indeed, the first conquest of India is usually described as having been accomplished just before the outbreak of our Revolution. Clive is given the credit of having laid the foundation of the Indian Empire between the years 1755 and 1766, and soon after his conquest immense wealth from India began to pour into England. At first it was largely mere plunder; afterwards the wealth drawn from India arose out of the revenue and the control of the eastern trade; and in later times from the trade, and the support which India gives to a large part of the British army as well as to the army of civilians from England who take part in carrying on the Indian Government. "India must pay us for governing her" is the modern English explanation, and India certainly has paid well.

The passage has already been quoted from Wraxall, in which he describes the £15,000,000 or \$75,000,000 which in his time was annually received as revenue from India in specie, in addition to "the commerce of the East continually poured into our harbors." It enabled England, as he says, *to triumph in the Napoleonic wars and it soon made of her a totally different sort of nation from the England which we had fought in our Revolution.* Fifteen million pounds a year in specie, in addition to the eastern commerce, was a tremendous sum to be turned into a small nation of only 8,000,000 people. Its effect is seen at once in the rapid increase of population. In the hundred and fifty years before our Revolution the English population had increased from 5,000,000 to only 8,000,000. But within only sixty years after our Revolution, with the wealth of the Indies pouring in, the population increased from 8,000,000 to 16,000,000.

The vast annual amount of cash capital from India soon promoted the mechanical inventions, set all the wheels of trade



## GROWTH OF POPULATION

and commerce moving and forced on the development of English manufacturing industries until they became the marvel of the world. Since the world began it is not likely that there has ever been any investment which has yielded the profit reaped from the conquest of India.<sup>3</sup>

The important thing for us to remember is our own good fortune in having begun our Revolution and secured our independence before this enormous access of wealth from India had gathered volume and had been reinforced by the subsequent development of manufacturing industries. Before our Revolution, with American colonies that were steadily doubling their population every thirty years while her own population had not doubled in a hundred years, England's power of control over America was steadily diminishing. This was our opportunity, and our ancestors saw that their population would be almost equal to that of England in the year 1800. But it was fortunate that they chose 1776 for their opportunity instead of 1800, for by the access of wealth from India, which they did not foresee, England had nearly 9,000,000 to our 5,000,000 in the year 1800, and it was not until 1835 that the populations of England and the United States became equal at about 15,000,000 each.<sup>4</sup>

English imperialism has had a very different history since the fullness of acquisition from India has been realized. Patriotic Washingtons and Jeffersons, Boers, Egyptians, Irishmen, Canadians, and Asiatics, have been consigned to infamy or oblivion instead of immortal fame, and have perished in exile, in sickly climates, or on the gallows, instead of living to be

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<sup>3</sup> Besides Wixall's *Memoirs*, p. 341, see an interesting discussion of this subject in Brooks Adams's "Law of Civilization and Decay," pp. 251, 260, 263; and also books on modern India, Digby's "Prosperous British India," Dutt's "Economic History of India," Naoroji's "Poverty and Un-British Rule in India," Tilly's "India and her Problems," and O'Donnell's "Failure of Lord Curzon;" Lamb, "American War," p. 385.

<sup>4</sup> In 1857 the population of the United States and of the United Kingdom of England, Scotland and Ireland became equal at about 28,000,000 each.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

statesmen and ambassadors of the land of their heroic endeavors.

Having lost her American colonies, England with population and wealth increasing was in one respect in an improved condition. She was able to hold such colonies as remained to her and govern them easily. The 200,000 Canadians, mostly illiterate and politically unambitious, and the 300,000 other colonists widely scattered in the tropical West Indies and other possessions, could give her no trouble. They could not unite into a confederacy as our thirteen communities had done, and any particular division of them could readily be subdued by force.

The difficulty with England's colonial system before our Revolution had been that her colonies had grown too rapidly in numbers, spirit and education to be controlled by her force and methods in government with her own population increasing so slowly. Her colonies rapidly tended towards outnumbering her. Her methods of governing them were extremely crude and irregular compared with what they are now, and there was neither steam nor the telegraph to assist her. But in the sixty years after our Revolution, when England's population suddenly increased from 8,000,000 to 16,000,000, her colonial population increased from 500,000 to only 2,000,000. Thus in 1840 her own population had doubled while that of her colonies was not so numerous as it had been before our Revolution.<sup>5</sup>

Returning to the situation at the close of our Revolution, we find that England not only began her colonial empire anew under improved conditions for retaining control, but she did not add to her empire too rapidly. She has never added anything to it equal to the American possessions which she lost, and, indeed, could not add a people of like spirit and increasing numbers without speedy dismemberment. For a long time

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<sup>5</sup> Mulhall, Dictionary of Statistics, revision of 1898, pp. 444, 450, 659; Smith, "Wealth of Nations," 5th McCulloch Edinburgh edition, 1859, p. 614.

## CANADA AND AUSTRALIA

after our Revolution her desire for expansion, except of course in India, was extremely weak, and there seems to have been no motive for colonization except the wish to have some distant place for the convicts and felons, who, under the strangely corrupt conditions of the time, were said to be rapidly increasing and overflowing the jails.

The settlement of New South Wales, the first Australian colony, in 1788, was forced on by the government merely as a place of penal servitude, and for a long time very few people except convicts went to any of the Australian colonies. The convict system and the discovery of gold forced people into Australia; and such was the disappointment, bankruptcy, disaster, not to mention corruption and misgovernment, that great efforts and encouragement were for a long time necessary to keep people in the country. The interior of that continent is still an unreclaimed desert and the settlements are merely a fringe around the sea-coast. Except for the convicts and the discovery of gold, it is doubtful if Australia could have progressed to any importance.<sup>6</sup>

Since our Revolution the English colonies of which we have heard most have been Canada and Australia. Their conditions somewhat resemble our own, their methods and aspirations interest us, and they have been fortunate in securing more privileges than other British colonies. Fortunately for England, neither of them had the fertility or resources which would develop a population too rapidly for the control of the mother-country, which soon became a nation with a home population of over 80,000,000 governing widely scattered and individual weak colonial communities. There was no danger of their rushing ahead as we have done. Australia, which was not begun until 1788, had in 1800 only 6,500 people. In 1820 it had only 35,000, in 1850 only 51,000 and now only about 5,000,000.

Canada has had the same slow growth, not numbering a million and a half of people until about 1840, and now numbering only about 6,000,000. No one of the other scattering and

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<sup>6</sup> Tregarthen, "Story of Australasia," pp. 24, 201, *et passim*.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

small dependencies which make up the British Empire is of a strength which would raise the question of resistance unless the South African communities, among whom the love of independence is strong, should see their chance at some time in the future.

It is important for us to know how England governed Canada and Australia after our Revolution and what effect that event had upon her methods of colonial administration. An impression prevails among Americans that, as a result of the Revolution, England learned to retain her colonies by the affectionate method,—the method without military force or coercion, which such Whigs as Burke and Chatham had recommended. It is supposed that England changed her methods immediately after our Revolution, acknowledged that the demands of our patriot party were reasonable, and that they formed a proper method of colonial government. The assertion is also often made that if England had yielded to those demands in 1776 America would still be a part of the British Empire.

These extraordinary notions are continually fostered, either directly or indirectly, in volumes which pass as history. But England, so far from acknowledging the soundness of the method of Burke and Chatham, or the reasonableness of our demands, governed her colonies by a method which was directly the reverse. No English colony has even now any of the rights which were demanded by the Americans of 1776, or any hope of obtaining them, except by a rebellion which would be assisted by some powerful nation.

Most of the colonial methods against which our ancestors rebelled were continued by England for many years after the Revolution, and in some instances they are still continued. The restrictive system of the trade and navigation laws, confining the trade of the colonies to English markets, was not modified until 1821 and 1825, and not finally abolished until 1849, as a result of the triumph of free trade principles in 1846. Lord Durham in reporting on the condition of Canada in 1838, speaks of the restrictions on colonial trade, the laws which



## OLD METHODS CONTINUED

prohibited the importation of particular articles except from England, and assumes, as a matter of course, that these restrictions will continue. He speaks also of the old restrictions on tea having been renewed, and the British colonists as still prohibited from importing it from any country except England, and smuggling it from Holland and other foreign countries as we had done.<sup>7</sup>

The principle which British acts of Parliament enforced upon us, of restraining the manufacturing industries of a dependency and confining it to the production of raw material, has been applied to India down to the present time. The writs of assistance which caused so much revolt and controversy in the early stages of our revolutionary movement continued to be used in full force in England until 1817. The "suspending clause," and other methods of disallowance of colonial laws, about which our ancestors were so indignant, were not changed by the Revolution, but are still continued in a more systematic and thorough manner in all the British colonies.<sup>8</sup>

Great Britain continued to tax her colonies without representation. The Australian colonies, even after they ceased to be altogether convict communities, were taxed without representation more than half a century after our Revolution. The old act of Parliament of 1672, taxing certain articles shipped in the colonies for consumption abroad, was continued after our Revolution and the duties levied in the remaining colonies until 1846, when it was repealed by the free trade triumph of that year.<sup>9</sup> Taxation without representation is still applied to the large populations of British India with the utmost severity, and those populations constitute to-day four-fifths of the British Empire. Indirect taxes are still levied on the crown colonies and sometimes direct taxes as in the case of colonial

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<sup>7</sup> Lord Durham, "Report on Canadian Rebellion of 1837," London edition, 1839, pp. 133, 207.

<sup>8</sup> *Penna. Mag. of History*, vol. xxxi, p. 268.

<sup>9</sup> Todd, "Parliamentary Government in the British Colonies," edition 1894, p. 210.



## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

light-houses. All this taxation without representation is avowedly for the good of the dependencies concerned, is intended to pay the expense of governing them and thus defray the general expense of the empire.

"The general policy of England," says Sir George Lewis, writing in 1891, "is to invite her self-governing colonies and to compel her dependencies to contribute to defray the general expenses of the British empire. . . . It has also been shown that Great Britain now spends less money directly on her colonies and receives more tribute in one form or another from them, than used to be the case." (Lewis, "Government of Dependencies," edition of 1891, pp. 49, 50.)

The right of any litigant dissatisfied with the decision of a colonial court or government to appeal his case to the Privy Council in England and have the colonial decision reversed was very much disliked by our people, especially in New England. They regarded such appeals as badges of subjection and servitude. But English colonists now consider such appeals as entirely proper, and, so far as we can judge from their published text-books, they profess to regard these appeals as a valuable safeguard of which they would not like to be deprived.<sup>10</sup>

Trial by jury may still be withheld in Ireland, or in any other British possession, and has been withheld in a far more extensive manner than that against which our ancestors rebelled. England has put down colonial rebellions and destroyed the independence of communities, as in the notable instance of the South African republics, far more ruthlessly and with far greater severity than she displayed in attempting to subdue our Revolution.

The main contention of our patriot party was that Parliament should exercise no authority in the colonies, should be considered constitutionally incapacitated from passing an act to regulate the colonies, and that the colonies should be attached to England merely by a protectorate from the crown. This demand was rejected by England, and would now be consid-

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<sup>10</sup> Todd, "Parliamentary Government in the British Colonies," edition 1894, pp. 307, 316.

## TROOPS KEPT IN COLONIES

ored as so completely out of the question, that no one of her present colonies would think of suggesting it; for if there is anything that is absolutely settled in English political or constitutional law, it is that Parliament has the same supreme and omnipotent power in every British colony that it has in London.

As for the other demand of our patriot party, that England should not keep a standing army in a colony or build fortifications in it except by the consent of that colony, it was, of course, rejected by England, because it necessarily destroyed the colonial relation and meant independence; and since our Revolution England has placed troops in her colonies and built fortifications in them as she pleased.

Since 1860 she has slowly withdrawn the large forces which up to that time she kept even in the colonies to which she allowed a certain measure of self-government. Regular forces of course still occupy the Crown and the South African colonies. The stability of the British Empire depends on the overwhelming force of the army and navy. But there are only a few regular troops kept in Canada and none in Australia.<sup>11</sup> None of England's modern colonists seem to have that violent antipathy to the presence of a red coat which was so conspicuous among our people, especially in Massachusetts.

In fact, England considers herself entitled to do, and habitually does, in any of her colonies, almost every one of the things against which our people protested. England even disregarded the American protest against transporting convicts to the colonies, and, within a few years after we won our independence, she established the colony of New South Wales in Australia, as a convict dumping ground, following it up in later years by the establishment of four or five other colonies which all became the licensed receptacles for the thieves and felons who could not be restrained in England and could no longer be sent to America. When these colonies grew and contained many people who were not criminals the convict system was

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<sup>11</sup> Todd, "Parliamentary Government in the British Colonies," edition 1894, pp. 391, 393.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

continued in them in spite of the protests of the colonists themselves and of reformers and philanthropists in England. The convict system was not finally abolished in all the Australian communities until the year 1867.<sup>12</sup>

One of the strong incentives our people had for taking arms was the alteration of the charter and government of Massachusetts. They contended that Parliament could not alter the charter or government of a colony without the consent of that colony. But England now alters any colonial charter or constitution as she pleases, withdraws or suspends it, as she suspended the constitution of Lower Canada in 1838, and afterwards the constitution of Jamaica. She had intended to remodel all our provincial governments at the time of our Revolution and was astonished at our protests and indignant denial of her right. Her colonists now never dream of denying her right to do as she pleases with all the various forms of colonial government.

"The supremacy over the colonies which appertains to the Imperial Parliament is a paramount right, and may even be exercised so as to override and control the powers possessed by any local government." (Todd, *supra*, p. 216.)

In modern times the mere threat to suspend the government of a colony, as in the recent instance of Cape Colony, usually brings the colony to terms. England's power and rights are now so well determined, overwhelming, and thoroughly known, that she seldom has to exercise them in their full extent. She exercises them with as much forbearance and caution as is possible. She consults colonial wishes, secures voluntary consent, is conciliatory and friendly, and grants such

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<sup>12</sup> *Pennsylvania Magazine of History*, vol. xii, p. 457; Tregarthen, "Story of Australasia," p. 12, *et seq.*; Lewis, "Government of Dependencies," edition of 1891, pp. 28, 155, 230, 232; Tregarthen, "Story of Australasia," pp. 132, 140, 205, 282, *et passim*. The editor of Lewis on "Dependencies" writing as late as 1891 said that "if the colonies did not object there would be a great deal to be said for sending convicts after their term of imprisonment had expired to start life afresh in a new country," p. 223.

## REACTION IN ENGLAND

freedom as she considers not inconsistent with the maintenance of her dominion and the general interests of the empire. For some years after 1838 the frequent success of the Whig or Liberal party in getting into power and the enthusiasm of the free trade movement resulted in many privileges to Canada and Australia; but India and the crown colonies are still held in the iron grasp of absolutism.

Judging from Great Britain's conduct for half a century after our Revolution, the lesson she drew from it was that the greatest mistake that could be made in governing colonies was to grant them privileges or free government, or yield to their demands; for such yielding built up the patriotic or national party which always exists in every community.

Before our Revolution, representative government was almost universally allowed the colonies, and, even when not granted in express terms, was usually, as Sir Henry Jenkyns observes, "assumed by the colonists as a matter of right."<sup>13</sup>

Two of the American colonies, Connecticut and Rhode Island, had the extraordinary privilege of electing their own governors. But at the time of our Revolution there was a great change of opinion in England. A reaction against colonial privileges set in, and in a few years the excesses of the French Revolution, followed by the confusion of the Napoleonic wars, strengthened the position of the Tories and confirmed English people in the belief that any kind of political liberty was a dangerous privilege.

For more than fifty years after our Revolution free institutions were discouraged in all the British colonies, and especially in Canada, where there was no local government, no county or township officers, and where the people were carefully prevented from imitating the New England town meetings.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> "British Rule and Jurisdiction Beyond the Seas," pp. 7, 8.

<sup>14</sup> "Local Government in Canada," Johns Hopkins University Studies, vol. v, p. 200; Durham, "Report on Canadian Rebellion of 1837," London edition, 1839, pp. 78, 80, 81; see also Report of American Historical Association, vol. i, pp. 375, 386; Jenkyns, "British Rule and Jurisdiction Beyond the Seas," p. 8.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

"British statesmen," says Bouinot, "probably remembered the strong influence that the town meetings of Boston had in encouraging a spirit of rebellion, and thought it advisable to stifle at the outset any aspirations that the Canadian colonists might have in the direction of such doubtful institutions." (Johns Hopkins Univ. Studies, vol. v, p. 200.)

In fact England made the most frantic efforts to stamp out in her remaining colonies any sparks of Americanism; and to erect barriers which would prevent even a chance wind from blowing them among her colonists. In 1816 she still thought it necessary to keep a wide belt of wilderness on the frontier between Canada and the United States. Her own people were to be discouraged and even prevented from settling in this zone, which was to be left "in a state of nature" as a bulwark against dangerous ideas. The people of Canada were split up into divisions and isolated communities, until free government among them was extinguished, so as to render them incapable of that combination and union which had been so effective a few miles to the south of them in 1776.<sup>15</sup>

Our Revolution caused England to tighten, not to loosen her grasp on her dependencies. It even seems to have caused her to be tyrannical and cruel, which, it cannot be said, she had been with us previous to Clinton's command in 1778. It was after our Revolution that she began that system of injustice to the Dutch of Cape Colony, described in Theal's "History of South Africa," which finally drove them to make the grand trek into the interior and found the Transvaal and the Orange Free State.

Canada had no legislature until 1791; and for a long period afterwards Parliament interfered so much in matters of purely local concern as to cause many unfortunate misunderstandings. Parliament taxed Canada without representation far more severely than had ever been attempted with us. Moreover, the taxes were actually collected and the revenue taken out of the control of the colony. It was not until 1832 that the

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<sup>15</sup> Lord Durham, "Report on Canadian Rebellion of 1837," London edition, 1839, pp. 45, 46.



## DEPRESSION OF CANADA

legislatures, after unceasing and bitter contests, acquired control of the revenues raised from their own people.

The legislatures were in continual and violent collision with the governors, who would not tolerate freedom of speech in the members; and, as Lord Durham puts it, "the practical working of the Assembly, commenced by its principal leaders being thrown into prison."<sup>16</sup>

The governors adjourned the legislatures as a punishment and wrangled with them as they had done with our assemblies in the old days. In fact, as soon as the Canadian legislatures got any control of the public revenue they quarrelled with the governors over the question of expenditures, and attempted to withhold supplies and salaries and starve them into submission as our colonial assemblies had done in Franklin's time. Thus, sixty-three years after our Revolution, England was still unable to settle this old question of salaries.<sup>17</sup>

In 1837 the repression of her natural rights and liberties had sunk Canada into a very hopeless condition. The enterprise of her people was checked and thwarted at every point; they were without sufficient schools, and even without sufficient *roads, bridges and railroads for ordinary transportation*. They often had to come down into the United States and make use of our transportation facilities to reach a point in their own country. Their whole administration was corrupt; the French and English colonists in deadly feud with each other; they had no adequate system for the settling and developing their wild land and opening up their natural resources; capital and investments were driven out of the country; and the *surveys of the public land were hopelessly inaccurate*. The masses of the people were kept poor as were the masses in England and the peasantry of Germany. They had no means or opportunity for acquiring wealth or improving their condition. Many of them left the country or threatened separation from

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<sup>16</sup> Lord Durham, Report, *supra*, pp. 51, 52.

<sup>17</sup> Bourinot, "Story of Canada," pp. 312, 340, 342, 343; Bourinot, "Constitutional History of Canada," p. 26.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

Great Britain, and all of them wondered at the liberty and prosperity of the United States.

The Canadians were suffering from a repression which England had never inflicted on us, for we prospered and flourished in colonial times. Canada was governed by what was called the "family compact," a corrupt aristocracy, or political ring, which in 1837 attained to such a degree of greed and insolence, that there was an armed rebellion against the whole British system and a declaration of independence by Dr. Robert Nelson.

It was a rather heroic rebellion; for the million and a half of people in Canada could not furnish patriots enough to give a rebellion the slightest chance against England's power at that time. The descendants of the large loyalist population, which had gone from us to Canada and now held more extreme views than ever on the integrity of the British Empire, were, of course, a powerful support to the mother-country and a cause of weakness to the patriots in the same way that their ancestors had weakened our patriots in 1776.

Considerable sympathy was felt among our people for the Canadian patriots and some secret assistance given them, but our government remained neutral and suppressed some attempts to organize expeditions on our soil. The small numbers of the rebellion were easily crushed by England and the leaders executed or banished. But the rebellion, in spite of its apparent failure, led to remarkable results, had an extraordinary effect on England's colonial policy, a much greater effect than had our Revolution, and it marked the turning point in Australian as well as in Canadian history.

Lord Durham was sent out to suppress the remains of the rebellion, and inflict the punishments which, when all the circumstances are considered, seem to Americans to have been excessively severe. He was to be governor of Lower Canada, while its constitution was suspended, and was also governor-general of all the Canadian provinces. But his most important office and function was high commissioner to investigate the causes of the rebellion and suggest plans for future government. On his return to England, he laid before the Government a most

## LORD DURHAM'S REPORT

remarkable report, which was said to have been prepared for him by the chief secretary of his mission, Mr. Charles Buller, a very able man and a person of some prominence in Durham's political party.<sup>18</sup>

Durham was a Whig; and his wing of the Whig party was usually considered quite radical. He had had a long Parliamentary service and was the associate of Lord John Russell, Earl Grey and other liberals in the beginning of that great reform movement which brought about free trade and other wonderful results in England, and afterwards passed to the leadership of Gladstone. In fact, Durham drafted the first reform bill. He had married for his second wife the daughter of Earl Grey and is said to have exercised much influence over that statesman.

It makes little difference whether Durham or Buller prepared the report on the Canadian rebellion. Durham superintended the investigation and the collection of evidence on which that report was based, and it was prepared under the influence of himself and the other Whigs whom he had brought out with him to Canada. It was, in fact, a Whig document and worthy to be ranked with some of the greatest productions of that party, without whose active exertions and occasional triumphs the boasted freedom of Great Britain would be hardly distinguishable from the freedom of Spain or Russia.

The report describes a condition of misgovernment and oppression in Canada which, as Lord Durham said, "no civilized community can long continue to bear." The colonists, he said, had "no security, for person or property, no enjoyment of what they possess, no stimulus to industry." The vast natural resources of the country were undeveloped, and people, instead of being attracted to them, were drawn off to other countries. After nearly a century of English rule the population had reached only about 1,500,000.

Nothing approaching such a deplorable condition of affairs was to be found in any of the colonies previous to our Revolu-

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<sup>18</sup> Greville, *Memoirs*, pt. ii, vol. i, pp. 162-3 note.

## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

tion. The poor Canadians certainly had just cause for their little rebellion that had been crushed. Thus more than half a century after our Revolution, the only lesson of colonial rule that England had learned from it, was unintelligent and unprofitable despotism which had proved itself in every way a failure. Our Revolution had not given freedom to other British colonies, but, on the contrary, seemed to have increased their burdens, invented new burdens where none had existed, and brought them to a condition of wretchedness unknown in our colonial period.

It is strange to find Lord Durham describing in his heavy, solemn way, as if it were a discovery, the old wrangling and quarrelling system between governor and assembly which Franklin had described so lightly and humorously nearly a hundred years before. Englishmen, with what always seems to Americans a constitutional failing in sense of humor, had not seen the comical absurdity of this sort of colonial government until Durham with great effort awakened them.<sup>19</sup>

To this perpetual quarrel between governor and assembly, this absence of any practical or vital connection between the executive and the legislative departments, Durham assigned all Canada's difficulties, her rebellion, her backwardness and the worst phases of the apparently irreconcilable quarrel between the French and English sections, which, with its bitterness, hatred and suspicion, made all other difficulties a great deal worse.

This race quarrel had been intensified by the Quebec Act and its accompanying policy, adopted at the time of our Revolution. England at that time, and for many years afterwards, had been so anxious to protect the Canadian French from American contagion on the south, that she had built them up into a little French nation. They were given the province of Lower Canada to themselves, with the French language, religion and law, and French privileges of every kind; and were isolated as much as possible from the English colonists. The intention seems to have been to save them from the United

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<sup>19</sup> Report, London edition of 1839, pp. 3, 6, 66-95, *et passim*.



## PREMIER GOVERNMENT

States by giving them excessive French privileges and keeping from them all local self-government.

But this system Durham saw must be broken up if Canada was to remain a British colony; and the problem was how to enable the English minority to hold down the French majority in Lower Canada and deprive them of the inspiration of their French institutions and methods. It could be accomplished, Durham thought, by uniting with Lower Canada the neighboring province of Upper Canada, where the English were more numerous; and this was soon afterwards accomplished. He even went farther and recommended uniting all the provinces in one so that the English influence could be made more telling against the French. But his main suggestion, the suggestion which bore the most fruit and altered the destiny of Canada and Australia, was that the old wrangle between the governors and the legislatures should be settled by giving Canada what is now known in England and her colonies as responsible government, sometimes called cabinet government, or parliamentary government.

The change consisted of the introduction into colonial government of the ministerial or premier system, which prevails now in most countries of Europe. The system of the governor and all the executive officers forming one hostile camp and the legislature another was entirely abolished and a new sort of relationship between governor and legislature created. The governor and the executive departments became somewhat dependent on the legislature, and the legislature, in its turn, more dependent on the governor. The governor was to conduct the executive business and control the appointments to office under the advice of a council or ministry which represented the wishes of a majority of the legislature; and such council or ministry was to go out of office as soon as it lost the confidence of the majority of the legislature.

The plan as first suggested was that the governor select his council from men "possessing the confidence of the legislature" and that he be governed largely by their advice. This was the form the new system took about the year 1840. But soon



## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

the governor's council was elected by the legislature and thus the system developed into premier or ministry government, in which a premier, or leader in the legislature, and a council, which is in effect a ministry, stand between the legislature and the governor. In this way the legislature exercises a regular and recognized control of executive business and appointments to office. The question of salaries was settled by what the English call a civil list, in which the salaries were fixed and permanent, no longer to be renewed every year by the legislature, or to be used to control the action of the governor by giving or withholding them.

The year 1847 seems to have been the first occasion when responsible government was made use of in Canada with any degree of success or efficiency. The period of its introduction and development may be roughly stated as from 1840 to 1852, when Lord John Russell, Mr. Gladstone and Earl Grey were in power in England and devoted themselves to the establishment of this new principle in Canada and Australia. To Earl Grey is generally given the credit of overcoming the practical difficulties and accomplishing the efficient working of this new method, which has wrought such a striking change in some of the British colonies.<sup>20</sup>

Responsible government was gradually given to the six Australian colonies and also to Cape Colony and Natal. It was given to Jamaica, but in 1866 was withdrawn with what appears to have been the consent of the colony. Some of the other West India colonies were afterwards compelled to surrender their representative government and became crown colonies.<sup>21</sup>

That this grant of responsible government has tended to encourage the desire for independence and may result in abso-

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<sup>20</sup> Jenkyns, "British Rule and Jurisdiction beyond the Seas," pp. 57, 58; Earl Grey's "Colonial Policy of Lord John Russell's Administration," vol. i, p. 203; Roberts, "History of Canada," chap. 20.

<sup>21</sup> Todd, "Parliamentary Government in the British Colonies," edition 1894, pp. 103, 104. British colonies now consist roughly of three classes: (1) crown colonies governed absolutely by the crown; (2) colonies possessing representative institutions of the old type, that is, a legislature

## TENDENCY OF THE CHANGE

late independence, cannot very well be denied. Sir Philip Wodehouse long ago pointed out that such a form of government "was only suitable to communities who desired or looked forward to a severance at no distant date from the mother country."<sup>22</sup> The Liberal party have not been unaware of this tendency; and the evidences of it in Canada are to-day causes of uneasiness in Tory circles, although that uneasiness is seldom allowed open expression on formal occasions.

In fact, this rather sudden and large increase of colonial privileges as the result of the efforts of Lord Durham and Earl Grey, was quite astonishing. Political observers could hardly understand how it came to be allowed by the English, who have a passion for holding every community outside of their own island in very strong control, and still hold in that control the large majority of their dependent peoples. The truth is, that the grant of responsible government was in some respects a political accident. The Canadians timed their rebellion at a most opportune period. The impressive revelations of their condition were brought before the public during an unusual era of Whig ascendancy, when free trade doctrines and extremely liberal views were sweeping everything before them. It was one of the most remarkable periods in English history.

"The explanation of a policy so foreign in this respect to the English cast of mind is to be found in the already noted coincidence of the free trade question at home and the Colonial question abroad. The British government moved as far as it did along the path which it took in regard to the colonies, because that path was parallel to its course in commercial matters. If the free trade feeling had not been so strong in England, her colonial policy would have been more half-hearted." (Lewis, "Government of Dependencies," edition of 1891, p. 33.)

Responsible government seems to have been an immense relief to the people of the Canadian and Australian provinces,

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elected with more or less freedom by the people but without responsible government; and (3) colonies possessing representative institutions and responsible government. Lewis, "Government of Dependencies," edition 1891, p. 44.

<sup>22</sup> Egerton, "Origin and Growth of English Colonies," edition 1903, p. 172.

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It swept away innumerable difficulties and problems, banished the moral degradation and corruption in Australia, the corruption, hopelessness and poverty in Canada, opened out the natural resources of these colonies, and stimulated their enterprise and energy. The value of the change was soon seen in the increase of population. The Canadians, after over seventy-five years of British rule, numbered at the time of the rebellion of 1837 only 1,500,000. But in the succeeding sixty years, under responsible government, they have increased to 6,000,000. The Australian colonies have also gained a similar increase.<sup>28</sup>

Responsible government for the colonies was not an original suggestion or invention of Lord Durham. The Canadian public men had, it seems, been clamoring for it for some time. They had waited long for their opportunity, and it came in 1837.

The great leaders of the Canadian rebellion, Papineau and Mackenzie, who escaped across the border, as well as the lesser refugees, Wolfred, Robert Nelson, Bouchette, Viger, and Cartier, were threatened with death if they returned. Samuel Lount, an ardent reformer, as well as Matthews, Von Shoultz and some Americans, were captured and executed. Others were transported to New Holland or imprisoned. In the last outbreak, twelve of the leaders were executed. These punishments seem to have been needlessly severe, when we consider that the oppression and misgovernment from which these people were suffering were admitted to have been intolerable, and that they had petitioned and used every legal, peaceable and constitutional means of public agitation until it was obvious that the British Government had no intention of remedying public grievances unless forced to it by violence.<sup>29</sup>

The Canadian rebels had a form of success which brought them great suffering and no applause, but which wrought untold benefits for Canada and reformed the British colonial

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<sup>28</sup> Tregalthen, "Story of Australasia;" Bourinot, "Story of Canada;" Lewis, "Government of Dependencies," edition 1891, p. 200; Johns Hopkins University Studies, vol. v, p. 229.

<sup>29</sup> Bourinot, "Story of Canada," pp. 348, 358.

## MODERN CONTROL

system. Out of their sufferings millions of British colonists in Canada and Australia are now prosperous and happy. The Papineaus and Mackenzies deserve enduring monuments of admiration and the same respect and reverence that we give to our ancestors of the Revolution. But the Canadian historians feel bound by that exaggerated provincial loyalism which is enforced throughout the British Empire, and they can accord to Papineau and his followers neither respect nor admiration. They are compelled to belittle them, and while cautiously describing their deeds as crimes rather than services, bury them in a cloud of loyal contempt.

In spite of the increased privileges which have resulted from the Canadian rebellion the essential control by the home government remains as strong as ever, and is far more absolute and well settled than it was before our Revolution. Neither Canada nor Australia have, as yet, been able to raise, as we did, the question as to what the word colony means. We held it to mean an independent state beyond the jurisdiction of Parliament, making its own laws as it pleased, and connected with the mother-country only by a protectorate to prevent foreign interference or invasion. But every modern English colony, including Canada and Australia, is under the full jurisdiction of Parliament; its laws can be vetoed by the home government; its laws are void so far as they conflict with such laws of Parliament as apply to the colonies; it cannot elect its own governor, who in every instance is appointed by the Crown; in Canada the governor-general appoints the senate or upper house of legislature; an appeal lies from the decision of any colonial court to the Privy Council in England; and the constitution of any colony can be altered at any time by Parliament without the consent of the colony. The text-book description of privileges granted to any of the colonies always concludes with the proviso that the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament still remains and can be asserted at its discretion.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Lewis, "Government of Dependencies," edition of 1891, pp. 43, 331; Bouinot, "Story of Canada," pp. 422, 423. See generally, Jenkyns, "British Rule and Jurisdiction beyond the Seas," and Todd, "Parlia-



## AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

Every British colony is now held down to these conditions by force; that is to say by political and social influences most skilfully combined with overwhelming military and naval power. The patriot party must remain quiescent, make the best of the circumstances, proceed gradually and indirectly, meanwhile adopting the phraseology of the most extreme loyalty, until some distant day in the future when under changed conditions England's power shall wane.

At times when imperial control presses a little hard, as in the Alaskan boundary dispute, some of the Canadian newspapers will speak of "national aspirations" and threaten England with "the loss of Canada;" or suggest that loyalty may become "a stupid adherence to nothing." Canada is fertile and prosperous and if independent would be more prosperous. It seems absurd that such capable and resourceful people should remain in leading strings. But usually Canadians, when in conversation with Americans, declare themselves entirely content with the privileges allowed them by the mother country. Many of them profess to dislike the republicanism, democracy and utilitarian habits which appear to them to have been the result of independence in the United States. They are glad, they say, to be protected from the rush and turmoil of our Americanism. If they really have what they want and are satisfied that settles the question for them. But it is easy to see from a study of our character and history, that such privileges and such a position as are theirs would never have satisfied Americans.<sup>26</sup>

English colonists, so far from having any of the rights for which we contended and in which we so passionately believed, have no rights at all in the American sense of the word. They are dependent in the end on the charitable consideration or the politic forbearance of the mother-country. England is of course wise and careful and will not change their condition

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mentary Government in the British Colonies," second edition 1894, pp. 222, 242, 244, 245; Montague and Herbert, "Canada and the Empire."

<sup>26</sup> *University Magazine* (Montreal), vol. vi, pp. 142-151; *Literary Digest*, vol. xxxiv, pp. 827, 870.



## POLITICAL SLAVES

suddenly or without cause. While ruling her crown colonies with a rod of iron and drawing great wealth from India by taxation without representation, she is at the same time so liberal to Canada and Australia that they seem to enjoy a condition somewhat resembling independence. But the English Parliament can, if it wishes, change that condition at any moment, and that thought our ancestors could not bear. In 1778 the English peace commission offered us as good privileges as Canada now enjoys; but our patriot party rejected them. At the close of the Revolution the Whig Ministry would have gladly taken us back into the empire on almost any conditions we chose to name. But it was again independence or nothing.

English colonists are still at best exactly what John Adams and Hamilton over a hundred years ago described as political slaves. They have what they call their constitutional relations; but the word constitutional does not, with them, mean a fixed principle, as it does with us. It does not mean an organic law of their own creation, which, if changed or amended at all, must be changed only by themselves. All their so-called constitutional rules can be altered or abolished at any time, not by themselves, but against their will by an outside authority across the Atlantic. The freest colonial constitution is merely an act of Parliament, subject to amendment or repeal by Parliament.<sup>27</sup>

"In the statement of constitutional rules, it must be recollected, that any emergencies may cause them to be broken. Improper action by the colonists, or a particular party of them, might compel Parliament to legislate in disregard of the ordinary maxims of policy." (Jenkyns, *British Rule and Jurisdiction beyond the Seas*, p. 12.)

Such a reserved power to punish for "improper action" has always been maddening to Americans; and to rid themselves of it they broke the British Empire.

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<sup>27</sup> British colonies have no absolute or complete rights, but only as Hutchinson put it, "Every assurance which can consist with the nature of government that their real rights will be respected." (Diary and Letters of Thomas Hutchinson, vol. i, p. 214.)



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